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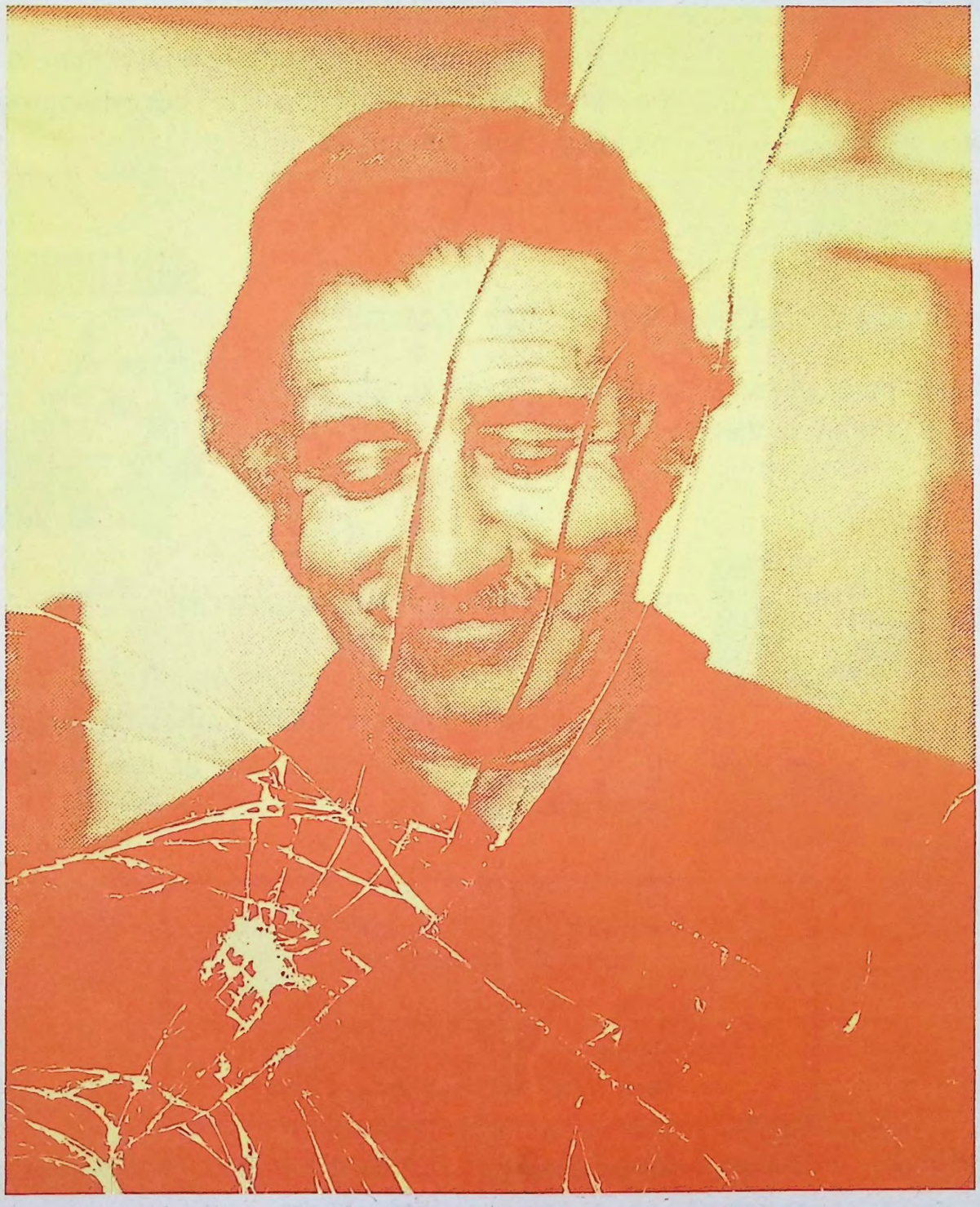

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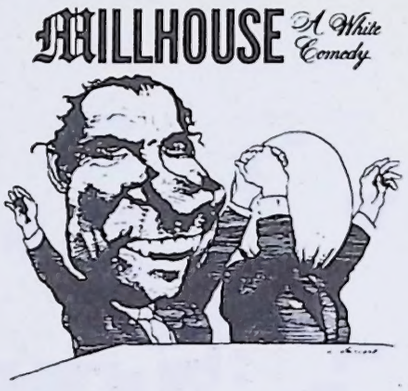

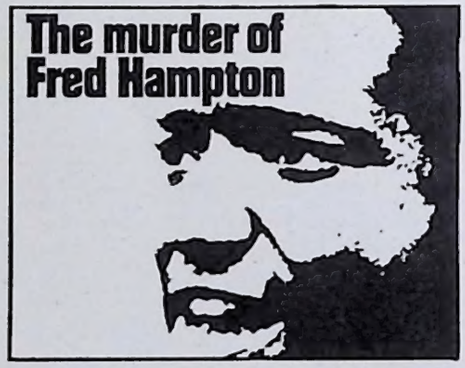

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TAKE ONE

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

A number of errors

I'm glad to note that *someone* (J. Pyros in "Notes on Women Directors") finally has brought to people's attention the fact that there *have* been fifty lady directors of films. True, JP suggests, with reason, that there should have been many more — but most womens-lib-oriented film commentators sulk and beef about it all in a manner suggesting there have been hardly any. In other words, ignorance of an existing situation doesn't help in "changing the world"!

However, JP has made a number of errors in this piece. First, the statement that Shirley Clarke "made" **Man in the Polar Regions** for Expo '67. This film was made by Graeme Ferguson, a Canadian film-maker, and *edited* by Shirley. I'm surprised the editor of a Canadian magazine didn't catch this one! Then JP says Ida Lupino directed **On Dangerous Ground** and **Beware my Lovely**. Not so; Ida acted in those movies but they were directed by Nicholas Ray and Harry Horner respectively. Also, **Outrage** was *not* her first film as director; that was **Not Wanted**, followed by **Never Fear** (released as **The Young Lovers**).

JP says that Russia's Esther Schub made **The Fall of the Romans** (**Romanovs**, please!). Next, the statement that Maya Deren "made her first film, **Meshes of the Afternoon**, with music by her husband, composer Teiji Ito" is a bit misleading. I believe the situation was as follows: **Meshes** was made in collaboration by Deren and Alexander Hammid, to whom she was then married; they also played the leads in it. Later, after their divorce, Deren married Ito, and his music was added to the film. Finally, the title of Deren's dance-film is **A Study in Choreography For Camera** (not **Cinema**).

George G. Patterson
Toronto 6

I thought Misses Platt and Armatage did a very good job of the "Women's Issue" (Vol. 3 No. 2) of TAKE ONE, but have a few corrections.

In the lead article, it states that Olga Preobrazhenskaya made **The Village of Sin** and **The Peasant Women of Riazam** — but they are the same film. Also, Esther Schub is credited with directing **The Fall of the Romans**, which should of course be **The Fall of the Romanoffs**. Also, the author leaves out Leni Riefenstahl's **The Blue Light** — and leaves out the director of one of the two best films ever made by a woman — **Madchen in Uniform** — Léontine Sagan. (The other "best" is **The Peasant Women of Riazam**.) And he (or is it she?) ignores Nicole Vedres and Jacqueline Audry completely too.

There's a new Italian woman director, too — I've forgotten her name — who is good, and we shouldn't overlook Susan Sontag, Marguerite Duras, Vera Chytilova, Wanda Jakubowska, etc., etc. Heavens, I'd no idea there were so many — and good ones too!

Herman G. Weinberg
New York

1. Nicholas Ray made **On Dangerous Ground**.
2. Harry Horner made **Beware my Lovely**. Ida Lupino starred in them.
3. Your inside-back-cover ad (Vol. 3 No. 2), aside from being sexist as hell, insults Stephanie Rothman, contributor, by crediting her delightful **Student Nurses** to its backer Roger Corman. Do you read ads?

It would be a good idea to follow up your survey of women directors by picking up the careers of some women from Europe and the third world: Elek, Meszaros, Bielinska, Cavani to name a few.

I just saw Liliana Cavani's **I Cannibali** (**Year of the Cannibals**) which American-International is distributing. The only parallel I can think of is Joseph E. Levine's selling of Godard's **Contempt**. **Cannibals** is, perhaps, a little more reachable: references to primitive Christianity, passing joints, science fiction setting, violence. The character of Tiresias-as-Christ, however, was not that way in the original script. It seems to be an AIP interpretation.

Basically, it's a modern-dress version of *Antigone*, and Cavani's use of male and female role reversals is interesting enough to mention. Britt Ekland's Antigone is a real heroine, playing the action scenes until she is knocked out of combat two-thirds of the way through. At that point the story goes with the co-stars, like this: Pierre Clémenti as Tiresias wanders around Milan showing everyone he meets her picture (like the heroine of a guerilla warfare or crime movie looking for her lost love); he finds her at the moment of her death, and is killed too. Tomas Milian as Haemon plays the concerned child begging his (usually her) father to spare Antigone. The father doesn't; the son ends in an asylum — like several Other Women of bygone soap operas. Although most of the plot comes from the original, the implications are contemporary, especially compared with the machismo of most Italian films, to say nothing of American-International releases.

Carol Slingo
Glenview, Ill. 60025

Ripped off again

I read your "Letter from the Publisher" in Vol. 3 No. 3, and that is what prompted this letter.

I understand why you have to raise the price of TAKE ONE — in fact, I would have thought you'd have done so some time ago. What I find somewhat humorous (if only to myself) was that you wrote, "As it stands now, it costs you 25c to buy a copy of TAKE ONE from a dealer ..."

Well, for the past six months, to be sure, I have seen TAKE ONE on the newsstands and in film-bookstores along Hollywood Boulevard — but with an attached gummed sticker price of 50c. Now, my question to you is, "Who is being taken?"

In closing, I would like to say that, at 40c, TAKE ONE is worth every cent and I commend you and your staff on such a fine magazine.

Michael J. Santoro
Chino, California 91710

The answer to your question is that we are both being taken. No bookstore or newsstand in North America was charged more than 15c a copy for TAKE ONE while it was retailing at 25c a copy (giving the dealer a healthy 40% profit margin), so there is absolutely no reason for the price in the U.S.A. or Canada being any higher than that printed on the cover. No reason, that is, except greed. — Ed.

No riot 'til Intermission

It's true that it's funny to talk about when you're talking about it and feeling funny, but there seem to be so many mentions of riots and other acts-of-man — starting with the "300 Flee Far Out Film" cover (which is funny too) — in my interview and elsewhere in the last issue of TAKE ONE (Vol. 3 No. 3), that I felt sad about the possibilities of the expectations of newcomers to my films being formed by descriptions of such events.

My films are made for attention, contemplation, meditation, and if they are met in those sorts of ways some very rewarding and subtle sensory, sensual and psychic states can be experienced, so please don't riot until intermission. (They're *often* met appreciatively.)

I'd like to thank Bob Cowan and Jonas Mekas for writing such sensitive appreciations of those states, and I'd like to thank Joe Medjuck and myself for the interview which was enjoyable, and I'd like to thank the editors of TAKE ONE for the layout and cover and for publishing this letter.

I'm a respecter and observer, as well as a shaper, of the unities of occasions (which is why I made very very few changes in the transcript of our discussion).

This is another occasion.

Michael Snow
New York

Take One blows it

The Institute wishes to comment on the "news" item (Volume 3, No. 2, Page 5) stating that we "cannot and will not" release **Directed by John Ford**. We only wish you had seen fit to check your "usually reliable sources" report before you went to press.

The facts are these: the film is already available for limited non-theatrical use in 35mm. It is now touring eight American college film departments, and negotiations for 16mm educational distribution are in progress. It is true that no theatrical release is contemplated, but this is because the film was produced and clearances were obtained for an educational film, not to be shown for profit or where admission is charged.

The excellence of TAKE ONE is jeopardized by the kind of misinformation spread through such "news."

Sali Ann Kriegsman
Head, Office of Information and Reports
American Film Institute
Washington, D.C. 20006

P.S. I am enclosing a brochure on **Directed by John Ford**, and a report just issued on AFI's first four years of activities. AFI Report 1967/1971 is available to your readers, and we hope you will mention this in TAKE ONE.

NEWS

Sheldon Renan, director of the Pacific Film Archive at Berkeley, has put together a handsome little **teaching-study guide for the Independent Film** which is now available (single copies are free; bulk orders will be filled for a low handling charge) from Kent E. Carroll, Director, Film Division, Grove Press, 53 East 11th Street, New York, New York 10003.

The first British edition of **A Clockwork Orange** had a final chapter which is not included in any later editions and of which Kubrick had no knowledge when he shot the film.

Statistics Canada reports that the value of

private-industry **movie production in Canada** (for the latest year for which figures are available) was some 43 million dollars. Of this, 25 million (nearly 59 percent) was spent in Ontario.

Polaroid has underway a transparency project that would make possible **instant colour slides and movies.**

In Canada, **Crawley Films Ltd.** has established a distribution arm (both 16mm and 35mm are being handled, with a heavy emphasis on the former) at their Toronto offices (93 Yorkville Ave., Toronto 185; 416-964-1028). George Christoff there is looking for 16mm films made by student and independent filmmakers for inclusion in an all-Canadian feature-length anthology of short films.

Two other 16mm distributors (and advertisers of ours) have recently moved their offices: **Third World Cinema Group** is now at 244 West 27th Street, New York 10001 (212-989-3330). Their West Coast office has shifted to: 2409 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley 94704 (415-548-3204). And **New Cinema Canada** has moved its operations to: 774 1/2 Yonge Street, Toronto 285 (416-920-8411).

Rumour of the month: The car chase down the stairs in **What's Up Doc?** did such damage to those stairs that the City of San Francisco is now giving much closer scrutiny to requests to shoot in the streets of that city.

The latest feature of George Romero (his last was **Night of the Living Dead)** has had its title changed from **There's Always Vanilla** to **The Affair**. The picture (filmed, like its predecessor, in Pittsburgh) is a contemporary love story, and stars Ray Laine and Judith Streiner.

Documentary filmmaker Richard Leacock (working under a grant from MIT) has designed a crystal-controlled **sync-sound 8mm system** in which the camera and the tape recorder cost less than $800. The system is said to be comparable in quality to 16mm systems selling for ten thousand dollars or more.

The annual conference of the **University Film Association** will be held this year at the University of Washington in Seattle August 20-25.

The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) and the R. R. Bowker Co. have agreed to cooperate in the publication of an annual **International Index to Film Periodicals**. The first edition (to appear Spring 1973) will index all articles and reviews appearing during 1972 in 57 leading international film periodicals (including TAKE ONE). Film archivists in 18 countries are collaborating in the indexing task.

The Rhine is now so **heavily polluted**, according to Consumer Affairs Bulletin, that it is possible to develop film in its waters.

In order to provide background information for a new book, to be titled **The Film Students' Handbook**, the editors are seeking people to fill out questionnaires in one or more of the following areas: undergraduate film studies students, undergraduate production students, graduate film studies students, graduate production students, PhD students, festival entrants, dealings with distributors, film jobs, and independent filmmakers. Contact (noting which questionnaire you are qualified to complete): The Film Students' Handbook, Suite 105, 26 Waverly Street, Boston, Mass. 02135 (617-782-3325).

Did you know department: The scarf which strangled **Isadora Duncan** to death had been borrowed by Miss Duncan from Preston Sturges's mother. (Did you know that, huh?)

Philip Morris' Clark Gum division has started testing (in upstate New York markets) on **Super Stick** — "the world's biggest fruit punch gum" — a single perforated flat stick equivalent (it says here) to 11 regular-size sticks.

CLASSIFIEDS

$5 for 25 words or less (20 cents a word thereafter). Rates for more than one insertion on request. Payment must accompany order.

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WILL DO FILM RESEARCH — all topics. Carole Basch, 1611 N. Normandie, Hollywood, Ca. 90027, U.S.A. Resumé, rates on request.

FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS

Filmmakers' first or second feature films are eligible to be entered in **Young Venice '72** (part of the 33rd **Venice International Film Festival**, August 21 to September 3). Interested cineastes may write or call the Festival's U.S. representative, Michael Kutza Jr., at 12 East Grand Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312-644-3400). Address of the Festival itself is: Palazzo del Cinema, 30100 Venezia Lido, Italy.

Revised show dates for the first international **Festival of Women's Films** (at New York's Fifth Avenue Cinema) are now June 5-21. There will be 32 different programs, including 13 narrative features, 4 feature-length documentaries and 15 programs of shorts. More information can be had from: Festival of Women's Films, 1582 York Avenue, New York, New York 10028.

The **Canadian and International Film Exposition** will run in Ottawa from July 21 to August 3. Organized by the Canadian Film Institute, the Exposition will highlight Canadian feature films produced during 1971-72, the best of international cinema chosen from Cannes, Berlin and Venice, and an international competition of film posters.

The deadline for inscription in the Tenth Annual **Science Fiction Film Festival** at Trieste (held July 8-15) is May 30. There are separate sections for features and shorter films (all of which have to have been completed in 1971-72). Write the Festival Internazionale Film Fantascienza, Castello San Guisto, Trieste, Italy.

Closing dates for entries in this year's (the third) Canadian **International Amateur Film Festival** have been announced. Entry forms must be received before July 15, and films should arrive no later than August 2. Films may be entered from any nation in the world, and there is a $300 first prize. Write: CIAFF Box 984, St. Catharines, Ontario.

The annual **Columbus Film Festival** is to be held October 26 (deadline: August 1). Any kind of film, of any length, produced 1970 to date, may be entered. Write: Miss Mary Rupe, Secretary, Film Council of Greater Columbus, 83 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

This year, the **Atlanta International Film Festival** (5th annual) has been moved back from early summer to August 11-20 (so as not to compete with Cannes, Berlin and Moscow). Deadline for entries is June 5. For more details: J. Hunter Todd, Director, Atlanta International Film Festival, Drawer 13258, Atlanta, Ga. 30324 (404-633-4105)

The 15th Annual **International Film and TV Festival of New York** will be held October 17-20, featuring a variety of awards for advertising, industrial and marketing films of all kinds. For more info, write the Festival at: 251 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

Exactly one day later, but in Hollywood, is to be held the **Information Film Producers of America Awards.** Films may have been institutionally-, commercially-, or government-sponsored, and entries should be made before July 1. Contact: Film Competition Chairman, Information Film Producers of America, P.O. Box 1470, Hollywood, Ca.90028.

An **8mm International Film Festival** will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia the last week of August. This is not a competition, but a selected number of films will be widely distributed (there is no entry fee). Deadline for submissions is August 15. Film Festival, Box P, 6152 Coburg Road, Halifax, N.S., Canada.

The Fifth Annual **Monterey Independent Film-Makers Festival** is going to take place August 23-27 this year. Entries (which must reach the organizers no later than August 1) are open to 16mm films (optical soundtrack or silent only) of not more than 45 minutes' running time, that have been completed after April 1, 1971. There is a $7.50 entry fee for all but overseas filmmakers. Up to $2000 in prizes will be awarded. Further information can be had from: Monterey Independent Film-Makers Festival, Monterey Peninsula College, Creative Arts Division, 980 Fremont, Monterey, Ca. 93940. (408-375-9821).

The Fourth Annual **Canadian Student Film Festival** (with $10,000 in prize money from Famous Players) is to be held by Sir George Williams University's Conservatory of Cinematographic Art this coming September. Entry forms and contest details are available at Famous Players theatres across Canada, or by writing to: The Conservatory of Cinematographic Art, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd., Montreal 107, P.Q.

The seventh annual University Film Association **Scholarship Competition** has been announced. Winners (to be announced in August) have a shot at six different scholarships (four at $500; two at $1000), and will be judged primarily on the quality of the work they submit, either in the form of 16mm films or written material. Application blanks (to be returned before June 30) can be had by writing: J. B. Watson, Jr., President, University Film Association, Fairbanks North Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755.

This is not an editorial; it is a statement of personal opinion from an American writer who happens to be one of TAKE ONE's editors. As an American, I have dealt with this material from an American point of view, but the problem is not restricted to the United States. If anyone, from any country, feels like expanding, rebutting, or otherwise dealing with the questions raised herein, that's what TAKE ONE is for. — MG

NOTE: This article was conceived and outlined with the invaluable collaboration of Hal Aigner. I would also like to acknowledge the help of Naomi Wise, who contributed many important ideas.

TO FOR ARM

BY MICHAEL GOODWIN

Violence is an inescapable fact of life. Therefore it is, and should be, a fact of art as well. Inasmuch as art reflects life, and insofar as the artist works with the stuff that surrounds him, it's no surprise that as long as there has been theater, death, blood and violence have been an important part of it. Greek tragedy, Elizabethan theater, American melodrama — all have dealt with violence. And no one but a sweetness-and-light freak would suggest that movies should be any different.

Nonetheless, there has been an ominous trend of late toward films that present violence in a pandering, near-pathological manner. Ideological film criticism is always dangerous, as censorship is usually worse than whatever it's supposed to protect us from. Still, I think the point has been reached where we have to examine certain recent films in a way that will allow us to get to the roots of their sickness — for sickness I believe it to be.

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT:

1. *Art reflects and informs society.* Sociologically, film is a loop. As a member of society, the filmmaker cannot avoid reflecting sociological trends in his work. But at the same time, film as a medium is so all-pervasive that the ideas presented, and *the way they are presented,* affect society strongly. The filmmaker has the option of influencing sociological trends as they channel through him or her — energizing them or damping them.

2. *For the most part, we perceive films as dreams.* This is a crucial point, and one that is little understood (except by certain political filmmakers, the children of Brecht, who are struggling to change it). When we sink into our theater seats, we sink into a trance-like state in which the material we absorb is primarily visual and emotional, not intellectual. Specifically, the images we see have much more weight than the thematic construct supported by them. We can discuss the intellectual material, and we usually do, but what stays with us is the image of what we've seen. What kind of dreams did you have after you saw **A Clockwork Orange**? Polanski's **Macbeth**? **Straw Dogs**?

VIOLENCE AS APPLE PIE

From the days of theatrical melodrama, violence has loomed large in the American consciousness. Perhaps this has something to do with the old Puritan ideology, based as it is on the concept of righteousness. If you're right, any action you take is justified. If you're wrong, any action taken *against you* is justified.

The western, our native genre, has always been extremely violent. Blazing sixguns, injuns and bad guys biting the dust, frontier justice and the law of the rope — all these are running themes. Yet the western is, at heart, a Morality Play — and in the end it was always the bad guys who were killed. Lip service was paid to the Christian ethic (usually it was a woman, the schoolmarm or the hero's wife, who spoke out against "all the killing"), but in the end everyone knew that since bad guys deserved what they got, the killing was really OK.

In the '30s and '40s, as the frontier grew farther away in time, a new form of violent film arose, one without good guys and largely without morality — the *film noir.* In the *film noir* (one of the classic examples is Aldrich's **Kiss Me Deadly**) there are no heroes, only anti-heroes, and the violence is unrelenting. Yet even in these black films there is a glimmer of hope, if only by implication: the *film noir* is specific, not general, and if it deals with the dark, insular corners of the human soul, there is still the whole universe outside it to which we can turn for light.

Despite their heavy use of violence, most *films noir* treated the pictorialization of violence with restraint. If it was central to the genre, it was still only one aspect of that genre's attraction. Audiences enjoyed the dark ambience, the opportunity to view the seamier side of life, and the fact that, for the most part, the filmmakers made no heavy-handed moral judgements. If there was a fascist undertone to the *film noir* (growing out of the assumption that man is basically evil) it was still quite subtle — perhaps even unconscious.

It wasn't until **Bonnie and Clyde** that screen violence became a *cause celebre.* Suddenly critics were up in arms: director Arthur Penn had not only ended his film in a hail of bullets, but he came in for tight close-ups of the outlaws' bodies bouncing in their death throes. At the time, I found myself in disagreement with the anti-violence spokesmen. I felt the emotional structure of the film made it impossible to view the ending without revulsion. Still, said the critics, this was only the beginning. Where could films go from here except toward escalated violence and stomach-turning details.

In the light of recent films, I'm forced to admit that they were right— not about **Bonnie and Clyde**, which I still consider to be a relatively tasteful and righteous film, but about the escalation of violence that would follow it. At various times I've made excuses for **The Wild Bunch**, tried to justify **Coogan's Bluff**, and defended **Bullitt**. But I'm running out of excuses and, what's more, I'm getting scared.

TOOLING UP FOR ARMAGEDDON

During the last few months (this was written in early February, 1972) nearly all the major Hollywood films to be released have shared a brutal, almost loving attitude toward violence. **A Clockwork Orange**, **The French Connection**, **Dirty Harry**, **Straw Dogs** and **Macbeth**, coming together as they have, open a window into the current state of American consciousness that I'd almost rather not look through. Every one of these films can be justified. Several of them are cinematically excellent, and those I enjoyed seeing very much. But cinematically, **Triumph of the Will** is a great film, too; at this stage of the game, cinematic excellence is like sugar coating on a poisoned cupcake. As sociology, these films are terrifying, and as art they're

OLING UP AGEDDON

disastrously irresponsible.

The arguments that can be mounted in defense of these films are convincing. **Clockwork**, we're told, is really an analysis of free will and brainwashing within a serious, ethical framework. **French Connection** is a realistic cop movie, and since many cops are brutal and sadistic, it's only right that they should be shown that way. **Dirty Harry** is directed by Don Siegel, one of the masters of the action film (not to mention the *film noir*), so its violence can be excused as the legitimate thematic obsession of an auteur. **Straw Dogs** is not only another auteur film (by Sam Peckinpah), but its theme — the necessity of taking action in defense of one's beliefs — is unassailable, even "revolutionary." **Macbeth** is based on Shakespeare's violent tragedy, and the killings are right there in the first folio, where they've been since 1623.

But all that's intellectualization; the gut message of these films is a lot uglier. Alex, in **Clockwork**, is a homicidal psychopath, yet the structure of the film is manipulated to make his violence seem positive, even good. Complexities of theme aside, we react to his return to freedom (i.e., the freedom to rape and brutalize) with relief. In **French Connection** and **Dirty Harry**, the main characters are brutal sadists, but since they *are* the main characters we can't help identifying with them. (As far as that goes, would it be much better if we identified with Scorpio, or the heroin pusher in **Connection**? The only choice these films offer us is between bad and worse.)

Ideologically, **Straw Dogs** seems to be the best of the lot — making a case for the necessity of violence under circumstances that, we must agree, seem to call for it. Yet the underlying, simplistic idea that violence makes one a "real man" (in the purely sexist sense) is a far cry from the careful analysis that ought to precede violent action. The film ends up being a commercial for violence: kick the shit out of everything in sight, and you'll be a man, my son.

Polanski's **Macbeth** revels in blood and gore, dwelling on details of violence that Shakespeare carefully placed offstage. In fact, the dreadful, unrelenting violence of Polanski's treatment is at direct odds with Shakespeare's theme. We ought to be appalled by Macbeth's actions, but by the time the film is halfway through we are so innured to the violence that we react to it with nothing deeper than weariness, and a growing sense of despair. If this is how the world works, then Macbeth's behavior is perfectly reasonable, even exemplary.

In addition, all five films serve up their violence in close-up, with near-pornographic attention to detail. **Macbeth** is the worst, but with the man-trap of **Straw Dogs**, the cigar-in-the-wound of **Dirty Harry**, and the lovingly-observed beatings of **French Connection** and **Clockwork Orange**, nothing is left to the imagination. Instead of being one element among others, the violence in these films seems to be their *raison d'être*.

Why are these films being made? And why are they so popular? If audiences get the films they want (art reflects society) there would seem to be a terrifying trend in American consciousness. If films influence their audiences (art informs society) the trend is going to get worse. What's going on?

I think these films reflect the desperate frustration of a society with its back to the wall. There are lots of reasons for the frustration, ranging from the closing of the frontier to the Vietnam War. We look around us for psychic breathing space, and all we see are crowds of people doing the same thing. The environment is a nightmare, the price of living is absurd, millions are out of work, the oppression of minorities grows worse day by day, and works both ways. The counter-culture may be in slightly better shape (at least it still seems to have hope), but the ineffectiveness of dope-smoking and rock 'n' roll as tactics to bring meaningful change is an increasingly discouraging fact. We are all, straights and freaks alike, largely helpless within the system (taxes pay for the war we despise, but just try withholding your taxes), and as for revolution ... well, yeah, but not any time soon. Welcome to America.

People without hope become violent. Cultures living on the brink of destruction become cruel. Human beings who are denied their basic human needs cease to be human, and become animals. I think that's where we're at, and I'm afraid it's going to get worse before it gets better. It looks to me like we're tooling up for Armageddon. The evidence is all around us, and not only in films. Alice Cooper (a currently popular rock band) features an act in which Alice (a man) dismembers a doll, throws the pieces into the audience, and is then hanged by the neck from an upstage gallows. More to the point (since there'll always be weirdos), what can we make of the fact that most of the major rock critics have *applauded* Cooper's act? Alex Dubro, writing in *The Night Times* (Berkeley) described it as "carefully contrived, [with] a very fine sense of showmanship." I mean, is that *all*? Am I the only one who's scared?

Cultures die, and new cultures are born out of them. This is a natural process, and there aren't many members of my generation who will mourn the death of this culture. Still, the death of a culture can be gentle, or it can be a bloodbath. I don't know if there's time to avert our headlong plunge toward the bloodbath, but filmmakers like Kubrick, Polanski *et al* sure aren't helping any. Their main characters are evil, and whether we call them heroes or anti-heroes makes little difference — we can't help identifying with them and, what's worse, internalizing them. This is the worst kind of conditioning, or brainwashing, imaginable, because it comes packaged as entertainment and we open ourselves to it willingly. Spending two hours as Dirty Harry makes *us* dirty, for in the act of accepting the brutality we become its willing accomplices. These films steal our souls, and leave us with little more than despair.

Despair is the stuff that fascism feeds on. If hope is gone, if life is brutal and the means of changing it is kept out of our reach, then why not grab everything in sight and hang onto it by any means necessary? Why not kill for it? The only answer these films offer is: Why not, indeed?

END

Don Siegel

by Stuart Kaminsky

THE B-MOVIE AS ART

They say that television has replaced the B-movie, but it's not true. The reason the "second feature" was often able to achieve a vigor and a disturbing subversiveness was that it was made, so to speak, while no one was looking. Sam Fuller and Budd Boetticher come to mind. And, of course, Don Siegel. Never taken very seriously by critics, and even less so by studio-heads, the B-movie director could work in a freer atmosphere than many of his high-budgeted contemporaries. TV production is so closely supervised by networks, sponsors and producers that any sort of personal expression is impossible. In fact, the only relation between television films and the classic B-movie lies in budget — whence the B-picture acquired its name in the first place.

I'm awfully happy about Stuart Kaminsky's book on Don Siegel [from which the accompanying material is excerpted], which is the first comprehensive study in English to attempt to define and assess Don Siegel's considerable achievement — an achievement that has managed, often against stifling odds, to bring distinction and a disquieting ambiguity as well as a unified viewpoint to assignments which, in other hands, could easily have been routine. The escalation of his budgets in recent years has in no way spoiled the unpretentious and exciting quality of his work. **Dirty Harry**, made in 60 days, is as violently unsettling and as unmistakably Siegel's as **Baby Face Nelson**, shot in three weeks for a fraction of the cost.

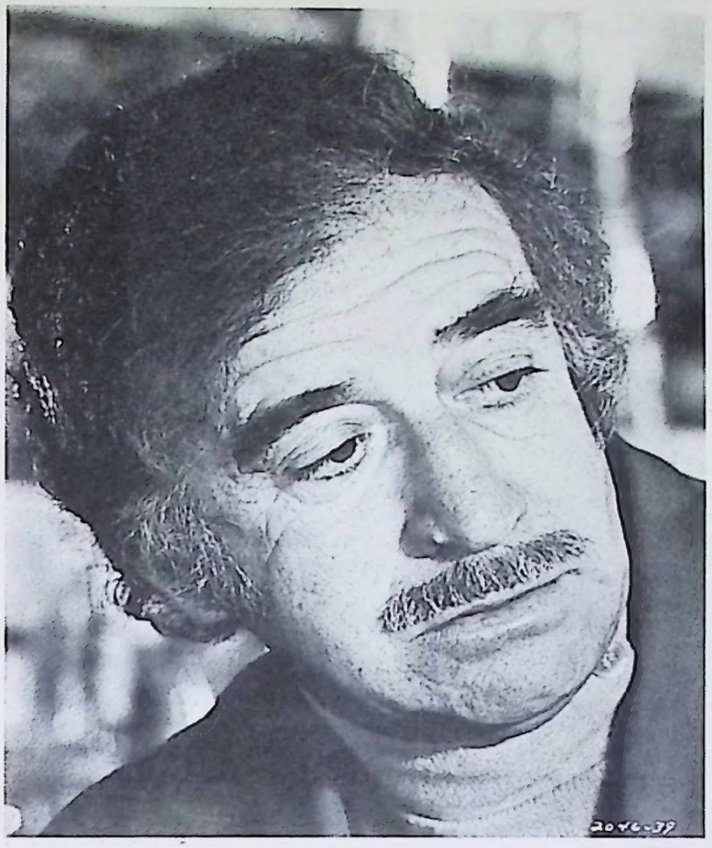
Schooled in the tough, no-nonsense Warner Bros. tradition of Raoul Walsh and Howard Hawks, he has brought his own personality and imagination to bear on a series of genre films that are as precisely executed as they are unconventional in their implications. **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, despite its pulp title and its tacked-on opening and closing (studio cold-feet) is, along with Hawks' **The Thing**, by far the best and most terrifying science-fiction movie ever made. A cautionary fable about the relentless movement of the world toward a lack of feeling, it retains a special meaning today, even though it was made while America was still reeling from the McCarthy era's assault on sensitivity. **Riot in Cell Block 11** is still the best prison picture to come out of the U.S. (its relevance is particularly acute now as prison reform again captures the nation's attention), just as **Hell is for Heroes** remains one of the only war films to examine the inherent psychosis of a man who is brave in battle, whose most anti-social behavior actually becomes heroic in the abnormal circumstances of war. Siegel's police movies, **Madigan** and **Dirty Harry**, are particularly interesting in the ambiguity of their examination of the easy corruptibility of lawmen, at the same time as they reveal the misery and horror of their daily jobs. On the other hand, he has looked at the underside of the world of crime with chilling incisiveness in **Baby Face Nelson**, **The Line-Up** and **The Killers**, and, as Andrew Sarris has pointed out, his hero — whether within the law or not — has always been "the anti-social outcast" in a world of pervasive corruption. A bleak vision, perhaps, but free of cant in its depiction, and distinguished by a remarkable sense for visual storytelling.

Even a casual look at the final chase sequence in **The Line-Up** puts to shame such more publicized recent examples of the form in **Bullitt** or **The French Connection**. And the fatal shoot-out at the end of **Madigan** is among the most brilliantly shot and cut pieces of action I've ever seen. It never fails to move me, not only because of the poignancy of its outcome in the story, but perhaps even more because of the excellence and clarity of its direction. Howard Hawks, the master of action, has summed it up: "That stuff's hard to do," and indeed it is something not to be taken for granted in a medium that has, for twenty years, been steadily losing its sense of craft.

Siegel has never been guilty of that — even with scripts that have been irredeemably flawed, the director's sense of structure and his gift for movie narrative have never faltered. His best work, I am sure, lies ahead.

Peter Bogdanovich

TAKE ONE readers will need no introduction to Peter Bogdanovich. His critical credentials (monographs on Welles, Hawks and Hitchcock for the Museum of Modern Art; film criticism for Esquire*; books on Ford and Lang) speak for themselves, but in addition he has four films in release, including* Last Picture Show *and* What's Up Doc? *We are proud to welcome him to our pages.*



Don Siegel is 59 years old, and for 38 of those years he has worked in Hollywood. He has directed 28 features and two shorts (both of which won Academy Awards), has produced a television series (**The Legend of Jesse James**), and has directed pilots and shows for such TV series as **Bus Stop**, **The Line-Up**, **Convoy**, **Destry**, **Breaking Point** and **Twilight Zone**.

It is as a movie director, however, that Siegel is best known, a director of action films displaying an intelligence that has earned him a high reputation among members of the film underground. Jean-Luc Godard, one of the first to write appreciatively about Siegel's work, went so far as to come to Hollywood to visit him. More and more, recently, Siegel's films are being found on the "all-time favorite" lists. His **Riot in Cell Block 11** and **Invasion of the Body Snatchers** are, according to the television distributor who owns them, among the most frequently requested films for American television.

Siegel's films show a distinct, evolving attitude toward man and his relationship to society, man and his search for meaning, man and his relationship to woman. Siegel's thematic interests, however, are carefully and naturally integrated into the genres in which he works. My purpose here is to suggest that Siegel merits, at least, the kind of critical attention afforded to directors of the European "art film." One problem is that, unlike the films of a Bergman, a Losey, or an Antonioni, Siegel's films never shout: "I mean something!" It is easy to avoid paying attention to a man who has entertained you.

The thematic pattern in Siegel's films usually involves an initial mistake by the flawed anti-hero — for example, Richard Widmark losing his gun, and the killer, because he glances at a naked girl in **Madigan**. The error frequently involves the anti-hero with a fascinating, but clearly mad, villain. Since the madman is loose because of the anti-hero's mistake, the anti-hero is obsessed with finding and destroying him. Invariably, the anti-hero sees the madman as a wild extension of himself, and thus his responsibility alone. In a sense, this preoccupation is a familiar one in literature — anti-hero, held together by restraint and conservatism, liberates his tempting, but evil, self and must come to terms with this second self or be destroyed. The most obvious examples are Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Conrad's *The Secret Sharer*, but the theme can also be found in hundreds of stories and novels of man wrestling with himself to find peace of mind. In a sense, Siegel's self-appointed task is the aesthetic exploration of schizophrenia.

A father figure is usually present in a Siegel film to counsel the anti-hero, and to warn him that personal action will not bring justice and peace of mind; that socially accepted methods are essential; that if one tries to act as God, one will be defeated. This father figure can be seen in almost every Siegel film. A few examples: Emile Meyer in **Riot in Cell Block 11**, Arthur O'Connell in **Hound Dog Man**, John McIntire in **Flaming Star**, Fess Parker in **Hell is for Heroes**, Lee J. Cobb in **Coogan's Bluff**.

The mad villain pursued by the anti-hero is generally vibrant, spontaneous, violent, even humorous. Siegel is drawn toward the freedom and resourcefulness of these madmen, but they are mad, flawed and must be destroyed. While the anti-hero pursues the mad killer, he is also drawn toward conformity, and a protective lack of emotion and involvement. This drive is diametrically opposed to the unpredictable freedom of the madman, and the anti-hero finds himself pulled between the two, realizing that he can accept neither one. The emotionless conservatives in Siegel's films beckon, argue with, draw the anti-hero toward them. To Siegel, this emotionless conformity is despicable, but it cannot be denied. It is at the very heart of **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, and is what Siegel means when he refers to "pods" and "podism" — the accepted norm of social behaviour. It is evident in the townspeople of **Duel at Silver Creek**, **Count the Hours**, **Flaming Star**, **Stranger on the Run**, and **No Time for Flowers**. In its extreme form, it becomes a chilling madness of its own in several Siegel characters: Eli Wallach in **The Line-Up**, Lee Marvin in **The Killers**, the police inspector in **No Time for Flowers** and even Henry Fonda in **Madigan**.

In the course of his pursuit of the mad villain, the anti-hero turns toward a kind of protective podism — he becomes super cool. On a figurative level, he has been deprived of the unfettered self which he is pursuing. When the anti-hero finally does confront and overcome the madman, he often realizes that podism must be rejected, that he cannot insulate himself from the pain of life. Frequently, if he survives

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Stuart Kaminsky has just completed a book on Don Siegel and his Ph.D. in film (Northwestern University). He is presently teaching a course on "The Gangster Film" at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He has written, in addition to the present book, five novels — all unpublished — five (published) detective stories, and a screenplay.

the destruction of his mad self, the anti-hero will make a reluctant attempt to survive and face existence. This is true of Robert Mitchum in **The Big Steal**, Cornel Wilde in **Edge of Eternity**, Stuart Whitman in **Hound Dog Man**, Clint Eastwood in **Coogan's Bluff**, and many other Siegel anti-heroes. More often, the anti-hero is either literally destroyed, as are Sidney Greenstreet in **The Verdict**, John Cassavetes in **The Killers**, Elvis Presley in **Flaming Star** and Eastwood in **The Beguiled**, or figuratively destroyed, lost with nowhere to turn, like Neville Brand in **Riot in Cell Block 11**, Audie Murphy in **The Gun Runners** or Eastwood in **Dirty Harry**.

In a Siegel film, if the anti-hero is somehow able to come to terms with existence, to bring the warring parts of his personality and the social pressures of conformity into some kind of tentative control, chances are good that other forces, primarily sexual betrayal, will destroy him. Women are deceitful creatures, forever playing Lilith in Siegel films — trying to lure the male to his destruction. Siegel's consistency on this is remarkable. His gallery of dangerous women includes Jean Loring in **The Verdict**, Osa Massen in **Night Unto Night**, Faith Domergue in **Duel at Silver Creek**, Ida Lupino in **Private Hell 36**, Dana Wynter at the end of **Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, Gita Hall in **The Gun Runners**, Michele Montan in **Hell is for Heroes**, Angie Dickinson in **The Killers**, Vera Miles in **The Hanged Man**, Tisha Sterling in **Coogan's Bluff**, and all the females in **The Beguiled**.

Seen as a whole, Siegel's films do not give answers to the philosophical problems they raise. The films explore the problems, and probe man's search for understanding in a violent, meaningless world — a search which, finally, is fruitless, but which Siegel's anti-heroes cannot help acting out.

Although he is known for his ability to depict violence, a great deal of the violence in Siegel's films is suggested, as is the thematic content. Editing gives the impression of violence in many Siegel films. The implication of violence, he believes, is more frightening than the actual sight of violence. We do not see Andy Robinson shoot the little boy in **Dirty Harry**. All we are shown is a black woman, Mae Mercer, weeping, mentioning her son's name and saying he was 10 years old, but the cut to her, and her reaction, convey more horror than the murder we see at the start of the picture.

Finally, Siegel's visual strength is evident in the chase sequences which generally precede the schizophrenic confrontation of anti-hero and mad villain. Siegel builds these chases slowly, increases the pace through cross-cutting and the use of many separate shots, and then concludes with an exciting and generally dangerous stunt, shown in a single shot. This sure-handed approach makes the chase climaxes in such films as **The Big Steal**, **The Line-Up**, **The Killers**, **Coogan's Bluff** and **Dirty Harry** among the most exciting sequences in movie history.

Siegel was born in Chicago. His family moved to Europe, where Don attended Cambridge University, and passed his examination on the New Testament ("which," he has said, "is a bit strange for a Jewish atheist"). The Siegel's moved to Paris, where Don learned French, the guitar, and ping pong. In fact, he became a ping pong hustler. At 19, he got a job with a ship's band, and free passage to the United States.

In the winter of 1934, Siegel found himself broke in Los Angeles. He called an uncle, Jack Saper, a film editor, and asked for a job. Saper sent Siegel to Hal Wallis at Warner Brothers. Siegel convinced Wallis to give him a job, but that first job wasn't much.

What was your first job at Warner Brothers?

I was a film librarian, which I thought would involve working in a library with books on film. However, I found that a film librarian assembles, marks and stores stock shots which can be used in picture after picture — guns firing, boats on the ocean, mountains in the distance. My job suited a nine year old, and since I had no ambition that was fine with me.

And then you became an assistant editor?

Yes, in spite of my protests. My boss, DeLeon Anthony, liked me and got me the promotion. I was the world's worst assistant editor, because the work was so dull that it was difficult for me to do. I spent most of my time rolling up film and cataloging it.

And then you got another promotion?

Yes in a way. A job opened up as assistant head of the insert department, and I took it out of boredom and curiosity. Then, for the first time, I found myself in love with the movies. We shot newspapers, close-ups of guns or railroad signs, anything a director wanted. There I was in my mid-20's with a whole crew at my disposal. I became interested, eager to shoot film. I convinced directors that inserts were anything that they were too lazy to shoot. I was soon shooting a tremendous amount of film.

How did you get into montage at Warner's?

DONALD SIEGEL FILMOGRAPHY
Star in the Night (1945)
Hitler Lives (1946)
The Verdict (1946)
Night Unto Night (1949)
The Big Steal (1949)
No Time For Flowers (1952)
Duel at Silver Creek (1952)
Count the Hours (Every Minute Counts, in Britain) **(1953)**
China Venture (1953)
Riot in Cell Block 11 (1954)
Private Hell 36 (1954)
An Annapolis Story (Britain: **The Blue and the Gold) (1955)**
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
Crime in the Streets (1956)
A Spanish Affair (1957)
Baby Face Nelson (1957)
The Line-Up (1958)
The Gun Runners (1958)
Edge of Eternity (1959)
Hound Dog Man (1959)
Flaming Star (1960)
Hell is for Heroes (1962)
The Killers (1964)
The Hanged Man (1964)
Stranger on the Run (1967)
Madigan (1968)
Coogan's Bluff (1969)
Two Mules for Sister Sara (1970)
The Beguiled (1971)
Dirty Harry (1971)

Well they had no montage department at the time. Montage had come to mean any series of quick-cut shots in brief takes to indicate the passage of time or rapid action. I set up the montage department without the studio knowing about it, under the man in charge of special effects, Byron Haskin. As soon as I took over montage, I got the scripts and began to rewrite the montage sequences. I would do terrible, filthy things that were unheard of in montage, like using sound. As I became successful, the montage became more and more complicated. I'd have fingers sticking to marshmallow keys of a piano, show giant tickertape machines falling on Wall Street, and have guns melting. To get what we wanted, the stars — Cagney, Bogart, Walter Huston — had to do precisely what they were told by an unknown kid in his 20's.

*I've seen your name credited as montage director in the credits of **Yankee Doodle Dandy** and **The Adventures of Mark Twain**. What other films did you do montage on?*

Many. I actually had more film in Warner Brothers pictures at that time than any other director. A few of the films I did montage for were **The Santa Fe Trail, They Died with Their Boots On, Confessions of a Nazi Spy, Blues in the Night, The Roaring Twenties, Knute Rockne All American**, and many others. I was also doing second unit work at the time, which included such pictures as **Passage to Marseilles, Sergeant York, Saratoga Trunk, All the King's Men** and **Northern Pursuit**, to name just a few.

And then Warner decided to give you a shot at directing. Two shorts?

Yes, **Star in the Night** and **Hitler Lives**.

STAR IN THE NIGHT and HITLER LIVES (1945, 1946)

Both films won Academy Awards.

Yes, the only ones I have ever been nominated for.

***Star in the Night** was the modern parable of the birth of Christ.*

Yes, with Donald Woods and J. Carrol Naish. I deliberately left montage out of the picture because I wanted to show that I could do other things besides montage.

***Hitler Lives** is a compilation film, a strongly anti-German propaganda piece with a great deal of newsreel footage.*

Yes. We were very strongly imbued with our hatred for the Nazis, and we wanted to tell the world that Hitler's spirit still lived, as it does even today. I think if we had the same short to do now, it would be done more with the left hand, with a little more humor, more sarcasm.

THE VERDICT (1946)

*You got your first feature, **The Verdict**, after **Hitler Lives** won the Academy Award. Did you have any problems in making that picture?*

One interesting thing was that I was working with Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre, who were absolute opposites in their approach to their roles. If you so much as changed a comma, Sydney was upset,

particularly if it was the last word in an exchange. He wanted to get his cues down to the word, and he studied his part very carefully. On the other hand, not only didn't Peter study, but he would come on the set as if he didn't even know what studio he was in.

NIGHT UNTO NIGHT (1949)

*Your next feature was **Night Unto Night** with Ronald Reagan and Viveca Lindfors, whom you married shortly afterwards. What do you recall about that film?*

It is one of my least favorite films. I fell in love with the leading lady, which affected my direction, and I did very little work on the script, which was a mistake. People didn't spend their money to see it. I'm not interested in making pictures people don't go to see.

THE BIG STEAL (1949)

*Your next picture was for RKO, which was Howard Hughes at the time. **The Big Steal** . . .*

. . .was an excuse to get Robert Mitchum out of jail. He was in jail on a narcotics charge, and Hughes dragged out this incredibly bad script to prove to the court that the studio and many innocent people were suffering because this picture was all ready to shoot and the star was not available. When Mitchum got out of jail, he came to Mexico where we were shooting. He drank a full bottle of tequila during the ride from Mexico City. Pat Knowles, who played the villain in the picture, and I took Mitchum to a steam room and both of us were almost beaten to a pulp trying to sober him up. The whole picture was finally done tongue-in-cheek, and none of us took it very seriously, least of all Mitchum and Siegel.

NO TIME FOR FLOWERS (1952)

*Then you did a comedy, **No Time for Flowers**.*

To sum up that picture, it was producing at its strangest. I was making a picture in Vienna, but it was supposed to be Prague. So every time I went on the street to shoot, the producer, Mort Briskin, said I couldn't use the best sights, buildings and streets because people would recognize them and know it was Vienna. I might as well have shot it on the back lot. I thought the picture was a poor man's **Ninotchka**, but the director wasn't Ernst Lubitsch and the star (Viveca Lindfors) wasn't Greta Garbo.

DUEL AT SILVER CREEK (1952)

Then you did your first picture in color, also your first Western.

Yes, **Duel at Silver Creek**, in which there is no duel and no Silver Creek. It was almost a disaster. I wasn't even sure of which hero would get the girl. The script was short. To make it look longer, we left a lot of space between each shot description in the final big gun battle. It gave us a good page count, and the studio told us to go ahead and start shooting. I started to get compliments on the dailies from the executives, and told them I was afraid we might be running short, but they said, "Keep up the same pace, don't change anything." I wound up with a 54-minute movie, and had to dream up a prologue about Audie Murphy and his father to expand it to 77 minutes. Years later, after I had done some of my best work, I was introduced to Ed Muhl (who was head of Universal production), and the first thing he said was, "I remember you. You're the guy who brought in a 54-minute picture."

COUNT THE HOURS (1953)

***Count the Hours**, your next picture, with Macdonald Carey, Teresa Wright and Jack Elam, was shot in nine days, wasn't it?*

Nine days is right. I never thought much of the picture. There are no miracles in a nine-day picture. Once I accept a picture, though, even if the script is terrible, I'm committed to it. With that picture, we shot as fast as we could load the camera and get to the various locations. I saw it on television once and was surprised at how poor it was. The nine days showed.

CHINA VENTURE (1953)

*And then **China Venture**, your first war film.*

One thing we did on **China Venture**, which was shot entirely on Columbia's back lot, was to go all out on the hurricane scene. The studio was afraid the whole stage would float away. I thoroughly enjoyed it. We thought **China Venture** was pretty good, but it attracted no attention whatsoever. It was a typical Siegel picture of the time. You had to catch it the first day at your neighborhood theater or it would be gone forever. Years later it would arise to haunt me, in a mutilated form, squashed into a television box.

RIOT IN CELL BLOCK 11 (1954)

*Your next picture, and your first really successful one, **Riot in Cell Block 11** was actually filmed in Folsom Prison. Did you have to make any special preparations before you shot this film?*

I prepared more for it than for any picture I've ever done, largely because of the producer, Walter Wanger. If I had read all the books on penology he piled on my desk, I'd still be reading. We wanted the film to affect prison reform, and I believe it did. We wanted a feeling of authenticity, and I think we got it. We shot the picture the way we thought it would have happened — with no tricks, no crooked District Attorney, no girl friend of a prisoner. The prisoners storming into the courtyard were actually prisoners. It was scary. We shot the picture in 16 days, at a total cost of less than $300,000, and it was an instant success. I still think it is one of my best pictures. A lot of the credit goes to the producer, Walter Wanger, and an amazing cast and crew, especially Neville Brand.

PRIVATE HELL 36 (1954)

*Your next picture, **Private Hell 36**, was done for Ida Lupino's company, The Filmmakers.*

I was terribly self-conscious on that picture. I had just done a picture on which I had great authority, did whatever I wanted to do. Now I was on a picture battling for every decision, working with people I didn't feel free with. There was too much alcohol in the air, and I thought the people I was working for, Ida Lupino and her ex-husband Collier Young, were pretentious — talented but pretentious. I was not able to communicate with those people, and the picture showed it.

AN ANNAPOLIS STORY (1955)

***An Annapolis Story** is the only one of your pictures I haven't seen.*

You've missed very little. We threw it together with every piece of color film we could find at Allied Artists. We even used 16mm film and Technicolor photographs. It was probably the worst mish-mash of color ever done, and my star, John Derek, decided at the last minute that he wanted to switch roles with Kevin McCarthy — which he did.

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956)

***Invasion of the Body Snatchers**, produced by Walter Wanger, is your only science fiction film. It is frequently cited as one of the best, if not the best, and most intelligent film in that genre. How do you account for this?*

The movie was about something, and that's very rare. There are pods — not vegetables from outer space, as in my movie, but real people who are essentially pods. Many of my associates are pods, people who have no feelings of love or emotion, who simply exist, breathe and sleep. I thought the picture exposed that very well.

For a science fiction film, it has few special effects.

True. We spent very little on special effects, less than $15,000, with which our production designer Ted Haworth worked miracles. We concentrated on the story and the acting, instead of spending thousands on special effects and sticking wooden actors on the screen.

It is especially frightening that the spokesman for the pods is the psychiatrist. His argument for becoming a pod is effective and repulsive at the same time.

Exactly. He really believes that being a pod is preferable to being a human, a frail, frightened human who cares. He makes a strong case for being a pod. How marvelous it would be if you were a cow, and all you would have to do is munch a little grass and not worry about life, death and pain. There's a strong case to be made for being a pod. That's why there are so many of them. The pods in my picture, and in the world, believe they are doing good when they convert people into pods. They get rid of pain, ill health, mental anguish. It leaves you with a dull world, but that, my dear friend, is the world in which most of us live.

The fear of sleep is pervasive in the movie.

Yes, we considered calling the film "Sleep No More". The fear of sleeping in the movie is the fear of waking up as a pod. That fear is very real to chronic insomniacs like me. One of the reasons insomniacs are afraid to sleep is that they fear they won't wake up.

What makes it more frightening is that the pods in the film can't be beaten.

They cannot be destroyed. In the picture, Kevin McCarthy stabs them, burns them, poisons them, but they rise again or others take their place. They can't be destroyed like the monsters in the old Universal horror films. It is more horrible than that.

The picture ends with a word of hope.

But that's not the ending I wanted. I was forced to shoot it, and Daniel Mainwaring was forced to write it, or they would have gotten another writer and director to do it. I wanted to end the picture at the point where McCarthy is standing in the highway trying to get a car to stop and listen to him, listen to his warning about the pods. He turns,

points his finger at the audience and yells, "You're next." The truth is that you are next. I don't care where you are, what country, sitting in a theater or reading a movie magazine. There are pods, and they are going to get you.

CRIME IN THE STREETS (1956)

__Crime In the Streets__ starred John Cassavetes, and the film has a lingering, eerie quality.

Well for one thing, with the exception of the opening scene, it was filmed on a single set, a sort of expressionistic view of a New York street designed by Serge Krisman and lighted impressively by cameraman Sam Leavitt. I liked the picture, but it came in the wake of a number of good juvenile delinquency pictures such as **The Blackboard Jungle** and **Rebel Without a Cause**.

A SPANISH AFFAIR (1957)

Your next picture is rather strange. It was shot in Spain, in beautiful color, but it never . . .

Ech. If I knew the Spanish word for "ech" I'd use it. I suspect that the whole thing was nothing but an elaborate tax write-off, for which I was well paid. It had a few saving graces. It was a beautiful travelogue.

BABY FACE NELSON (1957)

__Baby Face Nelson__ is probably your best known "underground" film. It's hard to get, but it's shown fairly frequently in film societies and at universities.

I know. I had a small percentage of the picture. In fact, I received a check for its showing at a film society a few days ago. The check is for $6.83, which is better than a kick in the teeth. I had nothing to do with the editing, and that was the first and last of my films in which this was the case. I edit my own films with my editors. There was more violence in the film, as I shot it, than in the released version. I definitely do not like the opening statement about "jazz, jalopies and trigger-happy punks." That was the producer's doing.

The casting of Mickey Rooney as Nelson at that point in his career was unusual.

To say the least. But Mickey was perfect for the role, not just because of his size and face, but because of his obviously psychotic personality. He is an excellent actor, a warm-hearted and good friend, but like so many little men he had a chip on his shoulder and he could be vicious to anyone who he thought might knock it off.

What do you think is the great strength of the picture?

The picture gained its vitality from the fact that we picked up Nelson as an adult psychopath, and made no apologies for him in the framework of the picture. If you felt anything for him, it was because of his size and his rebellion against society.

Your cameraman was Hal Mohr, who also did __The Gun Runners__ and __The Line-Up__ with you.

He is an excellent cameraman and he had a strong influence on the picture, but he was too strong for me. I got lazy when I worked with him. I prefer a weaker cameraman who won't give me a hard time about where to put the camera.

How long did it take to shoot __Baby Face Nelson__?

Seventeen days, but I thought I had more time. The producer came to me on the 17th day and said the money had run out, that we had to finish that day. I didn't like it, but I did it. We had 55 separate camera set-ups that day, many of them difficult ones. It was a record for me.

What other troubles did you have on the picture?

We had so little money that we had to steal sets and sneak onto lots. The sequences in which they hold up the banks and Rooney betrays his gang are good examples. We shot them at 20th Century Fox, which had had nothing to do with financing the picture. They had given us permission to shoot the Sanitarium hideout, and a sign on a gate. We posted guards as lookouts, and for two days at 20th we shot the robberies, the train sequence, the hideout, the lake murder. We couldn't have afforded to do it any other way.

THE LINE-UP (1958)

How did you come to do __The Line-Up__?

I had done the pilot for the television series and it had been very successful.

Did the relationship of the film to the television series cause problems?

I didn't like the opening of the film. It was too much like the television series. I always felt the picture should have started in the airplane with Wallach and Robert Keith's conversation. I liked the title even less. Some very good pictures I've done have been hurt by poor titles some executive or producer thought would sell, but did the opposite.

The San Francisco car chase at the end of __The Line-Up__ is known as one of the best chase sequences in any film.

I try to make escapes, chases, as hairy as I can. A near-miss is more exciting than one that's quite far. It was a wild chase. That shot in which the car comes to a sudden stop at the edge of the unfinished freeway was no trick shot. That was a five-story drop. The stunt man who drove the car, Guy Way, has to be part insane. His girlfriend was in the car with him. She was hysterical for days.

THE GUN RUNNERS (1958)

__The Gun Runners__ has some interesting things, especially Eddie Albert's performance as the cold-blooded killer, but . . .

. . .but we were expected to make a sea movie on a "C" movie budget. I loathed the idea of making the story a third time. It had already been done as **To Have and Have Not** by Howard Hawks with Bogart, and remade by Mike Curtiz, with John Garfield, as **Breaking Point**. Both versions were good. My version, with Audie Murphy, was shot in 20 days with no money.

EDGE OF ETERNITY (1959)

The star of __Edge of Eternity__ was Cornel Wilde. His performance, in my opinion, really hurt the picture.

I have a great deal of respect for Cornel Wilde. He had a detached retina throughout the filming. That's a serious and painful thing. It certainly affected his performance.

Some of the scenes look particularly dangerous. Were they?

Some of the things we did on that picture were among the most frightening I've ever done. Guy Way, who doubled for the villain, Mickey Shaughnessy, actually dangled from that bucket 1500 feet in the air. To shoot that, Bernie Guffey and I had to take a helicopter to a small plateau where there not only had never been any two-legged animals like us, but there had never been any four-legged ones either.

__Edge of Eternity__ was your first wide screen picture. Did you, and do you, like wide screen?

I don't like the proportion at all. If you go to museums and look at great paintings, you'll find they are not in the shape of a band-aid. These wide screen processes are a gimmick. I prefer the older rectangular film shape. Vistavision, however, was a superb process. I used it in **Hell is for Heroes**, but it was difficult to work with.

HOUND DOG MAN (1959)

__Hound Dog Man__ is like nothing else you have done. It's a wholesome family picture. Stanley Kauffmann compared it to Huckleberry Finn.

It was nice to do a picture that children could go and see. I wish I could do more. My reputation may be as a director of violence, but that doesn't mean I can't, or don't want to, do comedy or love stories. My favorite picture is David Lean's **Brief Encounter**. I might add that the film was based on a very good book, *Hound Dog Man*, by Fred Gipson. Sam Peckinpah, who had been my dialogue director and assistant, wanted to do a picture based on the book. I'm sorry he didn't do it. He would have done it the way it should have been done, small.

FLAMING STAR (1960)

As an Elvis Presley picture, __Flaming Star__ has two distinctions. First, Presley sings only one song and that is right at the start. Second, his acting is very good.

I think the studio made a mistake. They should have put on a campaign emphasizing that Elvis emerged as an actor in the film. If they weren't going to sell it properly, they shouldn't have made it. Presley was very good in the picture. However, I think that one of the reasons the picture did not get the recognition it deserved, especially in terms of its presentation of racial conflict, is that the public was unable to

get beyond the fact that Elvis Presley was in it.

When you say "racial," you mean White vs. Indian, not an extended metaphor for White vs. Black?

Yes. I was very conscious about not confusing the issue of non-acceptance of a half Indian with the question of racial prejudice against blacks. The question of prejudice against Indians was then, and is today, bad enough without using it as a simple metaphor. If our conclusion is pessimistic, it is because I can conceive of no other kind of conclusion for a film on prejudice if it is to be anything but a false conclusion.

HELL IS FOR HEROES (1962)

***Hell is for Heroes** is one of my favorite Siegel films. What do you remember most vividly about it?*

The heat in Cottonwood, California where we shot most of the picture. We had to start shooting at five in the morning and stop at three, at the latest, for the day scenes. For the night scenes we worked from 10 P.M. to dawn.

Perhaps the most striking single feature in the film is the last shot, in which we move forward into the battle. The screen takes on a newsreel-like grain, and we hear the screaming of men as the film abruptly ends.

I'm particularly pleased with that shot and, in fact, with the entire ending in which Steve McQueen is killed and the battle goes on as the picture ends. That wasn't the end of the picture as we had written it. The end was more affirmative, and we had shot it that way, but when I was editing the picture I realized that at the peak of the battle I had nothing else I wanted to say, no feeling of possible affirmation. I wanted to show that my hero was blown up, which was horrifying, and that the rest were still going forward, that he would be forgotten, that the action of the war is futile. I hadn't designed anything for an ending like that, so I optically zoomed in on the pillbox. It didn't bother me a bit that it was grainy. It had an authentic quality and it made me feel right about the picture.

THE KILLERS (1964)

*The "official" title of the film is **Ernest Hemingway's The Killers**, but there is nothing of Hemingway in the film with the exception of Cassavetes not running when informed that the killers, Lee Marvin and Clu Gulager, are coming to kill him.*

The reason was simple. Universal owned the rights to the Hemingway story. They had produced a film with that title, **The Killers**, in 1946 with Burt Lancaster. The working title for our movie was **Johnny North**. The studio thought **Ernest Hemingway's The Killers** lent importance to it. I did not agree, but I was outweighed, outnumbered.

***The Killers** was the first movie made for television, wasn't it?*

Yes, but it was not initially released to television. It was completed shortly after President Kennedy's assassination, and the studio thought it was too violent.

Lee Marvin is extremely good in the movie. His performance is possibly the best of his career.

I agree, but there was a time while we were making the picture that Lee's drinking was hurting the picture. We were doing a scene in a garage with Claude Akins, who happens to be a close friend of Lee's. Marvin couldn't do the scene, and I decided to have a showdown with him in spite of warnings from Akins that Marvin would probably lay me out. I took Lee aside with some excuse, went somewhere where we could be alone, and said, "Look, you can't work when you're like this. I could shoot it and use it, but you'd look bad. So let's go through it one more time for show, call it a day and do it right tomorrow." When we stopped for the day, I went to a bar with Marvin and he said, "I like the fact that you talked to me alone." That was it. He didn't drink again on the picture. His performance was beautiful.

Did you seriously consider dropping him from the picture at any point?

In that confrontation, and every one I've had with a star, I've always realized that if it came to a choice of one of us going, the studio would always boot out the director. Once you start shooting, it costs a tremendous amount of money to replace a star because you have to reshoot everything you've done. If you fire the director you may suffer, but you don't have to reshoot. On the other hand, a director who walks away from a confrontation with a star is lost. If he is to retain his respect, the director must stand up for what he thinks is right. Actors know this, and respect a director who is willing to risk his job over an aesthetic point.

*The scene in which Reagan shoots Marvin and Gulager from a rooftop, and Marvin escapes, is strikingly like a scene in William Wellman's **The Public Enemy** in which Cagney and his partner are shot at from an apartment window and the partner is killed.*

I did see **The Public Enemy** many years before I did **The Killers**, and while my recollection of it is dim it may well have influenced me. I've always admired Wild Bill Wellman greatly — both his pictures and what he stands for. Although I do not know him personally, from what I do know of him he is a man who was severely hurt by his rebel attitude toward those in control of making pictures in Hollywood. I think these people defeated him, and I predict the same ultimate defeat for myself. People who have known Wellman — including my wife [Mrs. Siegel is former actress Dee Avedon], who worked for him on **The High and the Mighty** — feel we are quite similar.

THE HANGED MAN (1964)

*Your next picture was also made for television, and was based on **Ride the Pink Horse** which had been directed by Robert Montgomery in 1947.*

The way we did the picture was insane. **Ride the Pink Horse** had been done simply and inexpensively, with a relatively small cast and a small Mexican town as the setting. So Universal turned around and gave me less money to do it than they had on the original, and made me do it with a New Orleans Mardi Gras setting that required a lot of people and a lot of money. I don't know why they didn't just let me re-make the Montgomery movie.

The film plays around the theme of superstition. The Hanged Man is, in fact, a card in the Tarot deck, and the protagonist, Robert Culp, is involved with gypsy fortune tellers who are trying to help him.

I did have fun with that aspect of the film. Since we did the picture at Mardi Gras time, I made use of the costumes to parallel the Tarot deck and ideas of superstition. When the killer, Gene Raymond, appears he is dressed as a clown, which in the Tarot deck represents foolishness — and he proves to be foolish. Vera Miles, another villain, dresses in black tights, and the gypsy girl, Brenda Scott, in virginal white. However, Culp, the hanged man, wore a cowboy suit which had nothing to do with the whole motif. It was his own idea. I like him, think he's very talented as a writer and actor, but he needs a strong-handed director.

But what about the twist at the end of the picture? The predictions that don't come true?

The girl has been wrong. We had all these ominous gypsy predictions and warnings to Culp — omens, cards, the whole thing — but nothing happens. I don't believe in Tarot cards, or any other superstitions. I think it's just an accident when they prove right. I played it straight in **The Hanged Man** until the end, when we see that everything the girl said was foolish. There are a lot of mystical, foolish young girls wandering around.

STRANGER ON THE RUN (1967)

*After **The Hanged Man**, you went to 20th to produce 34 episodes of **The Legend of Jesse James** before returning to Universal to make **Stranger on the Run** with Henry Fonda.*

Yes, **Stranger on the Run** was, by the way, another made-for-television movie, a Western based on a story by Reginald Rose. I had only one real problem on that picture: Michael Parks. He was an absurdity. He took himself very seriously, mumbled all the time, and insisted on wearing a long mustache which made it even harder to understand him. The studio didn't care. Budd Thackery, my cameraman, and I had to follow him around with the camera very low because, in addition to mumbling, he kept his head down and wouldn't lift it.

And Fonda?

In direct contrast to Parks. Henry Fonda is an unpretentious, consummate artist. Even when he was off-camera, reciting lines to someone being photographed for a close-up, he gave his best possible performance.

Any other problems on that picture?

Minor ones. We were shooting in a valley away from the studio, and the train that ran through the town had to be brought in. It was a valuable piece of Universal Studio property and couldn't be moved in the rain. Working an 18-day schedule, we lost valuable time when the production office held back on sending the train in fear of rain which, by the way, never came. Oh yes, the town we shot in had been built for another Fonda picture, **Welcome to Hard Times**, directed by Burt Kennedy. Well, Kennedy had to burn the town for the end of his picture, so we had to explain in our picture why the town was charred from the start. My writer, Dean Riesner,

took advantage of the burned town and made the threat at the beginning more visual, more real.

MADIGAN (1968)

*I know you like **Madigan**, but I also know you had a great many problems in shooting it because of the producer, Frank Rosenberg.*

One problem was that he had us start work by shooting the last scene in the picture, the scene in which Inger Stevens screams at Fonda, calls him names, because her husband has been killed. I got along very well with Inger and we both realized it was going to be very hard to do this emotional scene on our first day of work. So, I said to her, "Inger, this shooting schedule was the idea of our distinguished producer. Make it work for you. In the scene, pretend you're talking to the producer, not Fonda." She did, and the scene was excellent.

What about the opening credits, the New York skyline at night?

The producer's idea. I wanted the credits to run over Richard Widmark and Harry Guardino crossing the street and going up the stairs. The way I wanted it, the credits would have ended just as Widmark kicks down the door.

Did you agree with the producer about anything?

Yes, the original title, **Friday, Saturday and Sunday**, but the studio didn't like it.

DEATH OF A GUNFIGHTER (1968)

*The director credited with **Death of a Gunfighter**, which starred Richard Widmark, was Allen Smithee but, in fact, you directed a good part of the film didn't you?*

Widmark asked me to direct his next picture after **Madigan**. At that time it was called **Patch**. It later became **Death of a Gunfighter**. I was tied up on another project, however, and suggested that Widmark get Bob Totten, who had done some **Jesse James** shows for me, and some excellent segments of **Gunsmoke** and **Bonanza**. After 25 days of shooting, Widmark called me and said he could not finish the picture with Totten. I reluctantly agreed to step in and finish it. I'm not too familiar with what happened between Totten and Widmark, but I know that Widmark has a lightning temper. So, when I stepped in to do the last part of the picture and started making changes, I anticipated trouble — but there was none. Totten did the first half and I did the last half, but I had nothing to do with the sets, decor, makeup or casting. In addition, I had not worked with the writer in preparing the script. So, when I was asked to let my name be on the credits, I refused. A director's job is more than yelling "Action" and "Cut."

COOGAN'S BLUFF (1969)

How did you get involved in your first picture with Clint Eastwood?

Coogan's Bluff was born out of chaos. I came on the picture in 1968, after five scripts had been written and one director had quit. Sometimes I have the feeling that I met Clint, and got the picture, because my name sounded like a combination of the man who had been the director, Alex Segal, and the man they were considering to replace him, Don Taylor.

You had a great deal of trouble getting together a script you and Clint liked, isn't that so?

It is, and by the time we did get a script and were ready to shoot, it was November. The picture is set in the summer, and our location shooting in New York had to go into December. Fortunately, we had tremendous luck with the weather. The day we left New York it snowed. After two days shooting on the Mohave desert, it snowed there too. We had to wait a week for the snow to disappear. The poor Indian in the film had nothing on but shorts, and he was freezing. We had to stop between takes to warm him up and get rid of the goose bumps.

What about working with Clint Eastwood?

I found Clint very knowledgeable about making pictures, and very good at knowing what to do with the camera. I also found that he is inclined to underestimate himself a little as an actor, in terms of the range he can cover.

*There is a certain similarity between **Madigan** and **Coogan's Bluff**. Both Madigan and Coogan lose their prisoner, and their gun, and spend most of the picture trying to get them back to make up for their mistake.*

Yes, but there is an important difference. Coogan is told definitely not to do something, not to get his prisoner until the papers are processed. Coogan deliberately does things that he has no right to do. Madigan, however, makes an honest mistake. He doesn't know Benish is wanted for murder when he loses him.

Was there anything you wanted in the picture that you took out because of Clint?

Yes. There were a lot of things I wanted to do that he talked me out of without too much trouble. When Clint arrives at the 23rd Precinct he meets the girl, Susan Clark, and makes a very quick date. I thought it was too Hollywood-ish. It happened too fast. What I wanted to do was pick up a bunch of kids playing cowboys and Indians outside. I thought it would be interesting to see the kids shooting, and the police coming out and walking past them. I wanted to have Clint and the girl come out of the station arguing. He sees the kids shooting at him, reacts in mock terror, and hurries the girl into a cab in a comic escape. I thought it would be fun. Clint thought it was too cutie-pie. Maybe he was right.

*Did you find it difficult to deal with Clint's anti-hero image in **Coogan's Bluff**?*

No, it is much easier to work with Clint as a tarnished anti-hero. You can poke fun at him. He makes mistakes, does things in questionable taste. He is not a white knight rescuing the girl; he seduces her.

TWO MULES FOR SISTER SARA (1970)

*In **Two Mules for Sister Sara** you have a prostitute pretending she's a nun, and doing some rather unreligious things. Have people protested about this?*

We didn't run into anywhere near the trouble we thought we would have. However, to Shirley's astonishment and amusement, she does find a mysterious power in the Cross, especially in the scene where the rays of the sun reflecting from the Cross blind the Indians. I think, in a sense, she becomes a believer.

The film was shot entirely in Mexico, with Luis Bunuel's cameraman Gabriel Figueroa.

That's correct, and Figueroa did a fine job. One of the things I'm particularly proud of in the film, however, was not shot by Figueroa and Siegel, but by Joe Cavalier, my assistant director. He took a crew into the desert to get the opening credit shots — various animals in the foreground with Clint riding in the background. I told him what I wanted, and it took him two weeks to get it, but it was worth it; it set up a feeling for the kind of animalistic man who was our hero. It's one of the best credit sequences I've seen.

The final battle at the fort is very much like a Siegel montage from the Warner Brothers days.

Intentionally so. It involved a careful scripting of over 70 camera set-ups, from which we took about 120 shots — no one of them on the screen for more than five seconds. I had every shot tilted in the opposite direction from the one before. I worked hard on making that battle sequence work because there was nothing in the story that fully justified it. My goal was to make it justify itself by being very exciting.

Did you have any problems with the producer on this film?

It was a classic example of not getting along with the producer — in this case, Marty Rackin. Ninety five percent of my time on that picture, and most pictures which I don't produce myself, is spent outwitting, outfoxing and putting on an act for the producer. Marty Rackin and I did not get along. I'd make my points, but he would walk away saying, "I lose the battles, but I win the war." He won the war on **Two Mules** because he, not I, did the final editing. It was a limited victory for him, however, because if you cut the picture in the camera, shoot the minimum, and get to do the first cut, there isn't much leeway in editing the picture unless the producer orders more film shot.

THE BEGUILED (1971)

*How do you rate **The Beguiled** in relation to your other films?*

The Beguiled is the best film I have done, and possibly the best I will ever do.

Why did you want to do this picture?

One reason is that it is a woman's picture, not a picture for women, but about them. Women are capable of deceit, larceny, murder, anything. Behind that mask of innocence lurks just as much evil as you'll find in members of the Mafia. Any young girl, who looks perfectly harmless, is capable of murder.

The film has a haunting inevitability about it.

There is a careful unity about the film, starting with the first frame. We begin with black and white and end with black and white; we start with Clint and the mushrooms, and end with them; we start with Clint practically dead, and end with him dead. The film is rounded, intentionally turned in on itself.

The picture is visually rich and, as in most of your films, the dialogue is minimal.

I tried to keep the dialogue to a minimum. I try to do that in all my pictures. I'd rather show things than say them. Many times this doesn't work, because I get terribly involved in thinking that what I want to communicate should be said in words.

DIRTY HARRY (1971)

Dirty Harry** is radically different from **The Beguiled.

It's more in the genre of the kind of films I'm noted for. **Dirty Harry** is a wall-to-wall carpet of violence, and there isn't much subtlety to it, although there are a few things in it that might escape you. It's a simple story, basically, but physically an extremely difficult one to direct. It's a story about the San Francisco Police Department, and a death struggle with a man who's terrorizing the city, someone like the Zodiac killer.

***Dirty Harry** touches all the fears of urban life. It's a nightmare, epitomized in your killer who is a culmination of the many mad killers you've developed. Andy Robinson in **Dirty Harry** is a madman without reason, without a name or background.*

Yes. Now, that was very deliberate. I took the situation as it existed, without going into the raison d'etre for the killer's action. I wasn't interested in his background. All I was interested in was that he was the killer. Why he became a killer (the fact that his parents broke up when he was at an early age, or something like that) was left behind, because it represented dead footage for me, at least in a picture of this type. I tried to play the killer as normal-looking as possible, not with a wild face or appearance. I have a theory that anybody can be a killer, is a potential killer. I decided I would do little touches which you may never pick up: he wears a pair of black parachute boots with the white lace going straight up in a military manner, very strange. I always show him cleaning his boots, rubbing them on his pants leg. Maybe, just maybe, this nut has come back from Vietnam, and what we see is the result of that experience. I do another thing — absolutely, totally irresponsible on my part, and I may be criticized for it. I got the largest buckle I could get with a slightly lopsided peace symbol on it, and I had my killer wear it. I don't know what that buckle means exactly, but it seems to me that it may remind us that no matter how vicious a person is, when he looks into the mirror, he's not capable of seeing the truth about himself.

*There is very little dialogue in **Dirty Harry**.*

Dirty Harry, number one, is an action piece. Number two, I felt the picture needed very little exposition. It takes place. It's there. There's a city that's being policed rather well. A killer is loose and they go after him. However, they have a great deal of trouble with this killer, because I always like my villains to be brighter than my heroes. The killer is all by himself, and he's quite brilliant, mysteriously so. You never quite see how he gets into or out of a place. I hold that knowledge back, so that he's almost a cunning Superman, although not a physical one.

*On the other side, the side of the law, you have another Superman, the detective, Dirty Harry, played by Clint Eastwood. In **Coogan's Bluff**, Clint was conservative. In **Dirty Harry** he's plain reactionary.*

Dirty Harry is a bigot. He's a bitter man. He doesn't like people. He has no use for anyone who breaks the law, and he doesn't like the way the law is administered. He doesn't go for all this fol-de-rol modern method of treating criminals. This doesn't mean I agree with him. Harry thinks that when a guy is bad, you get him. You don't worry about his rights. You don't play with him.

*You work very closely with your editor, yet you allow quite a bit of time to pass, as much as a month, between the time you finish shooting and the time you start editing. I know this was true of **Dirty Harry**.*

After shooting a picture I stay away from it for a while. I've been terribly close, don't forget, throughout all the stages: writing of the screenplay, casting, finding locations, wardrobe, building of sets, endless work. I've had it. I need a rest. Then, when I look at the first assembled picture, I don't want anyone to talk to me. I just look at it as a whole. I want to look at it in its total fullness, so I have some feeling that: God, this picture's slow, or Wow, it's good, or Jesus, I have to do something about such and such. The result is almost always the same. I'm livid with myself for many of the terrible things I okayed. I go home, thoroughly depressed. But an anger is building up, and I come back the next day and I just can't wait to get at that goddam film and rip it to shreds. For, at that point, nothing in the film is sacred, absolutely nothing. If I don't think it works, out it goes. I couldn't possibly leave decisions like this to the editor.

You use a black actor as the man who beats up the murderer.

That was a macabre gesture. It struck me as ironic that this psychopathic killer would go to a black and that the black would beat him without any feeling. He does a professional job. There is no anti-black feeling displayed by the killer, and no anti-white feeling displayed by the man doing the beating. However, at the end of the beating, the killer does not think he is being beaten enough, and calls the other man a black son of a bitch to try to excite him and get him to give a worse beating.

There are a couple of touches in the movie which go along with a point I've heard you make several times. These deal with your concept that a hint of violence is more effective than the violence itself.

That is a particular forte or trick of mine. You always have the feeling, in looking at my pictures, that there's a great deal more violence than there really is. The violence is imminent, latent. At some stage the violence is tremendous, so that you know it's going to explode, rather than to have every sequence with people getting senselessly beaten up. A good example is the scene we just talked about. The way the beating was written every blow was seen, along with the result of every blow. We could have done it, but it would have meant a make-up job after each shot. It would have gone on endlessly. I only have you see the killer before he gets beaten up and afterwards. There's one make-up job. I shot it in such a way that you're unable to tell what damage is being inflicted. Yet I think the effect is terrific, even more so than if you were to see the most gratuitous kind of violence, violence for violence's sake.

Don't you feel the audience will question Harry's motives, since you give him very little background?

I feel you're going to be on the edge of your seat. You're not going to have time to question or think about these things. Another director would say: "Where did he come from? Why did he do that?" I'm not saying that's wrong, but it's a bit old fashioned. Today you just sort of pick up whole and go with it.

*Your end for **Dirty Harry** is a variation on a frequently used Western ending, hinging on the question of whether or not the hero has any bullets left in his gun, or is just bluffing.*

Yes, but we prepared for it carefully. Remember in the beginning, when the black bank robber is lying mortally wounded, Harry deliberately goes over and as the robber starts to reach for his gun, Harry tells him to go ahead if he feels lucky, that maybe Clint is out of bullets. The robber decides not to try it. Clint points his gun at the robber, who says he has to know if he was bluffing, and pulls the trigger. There's no bullet. Eastwood has the same dialogue at the end. The only difference is that when he says it to the robber at the beginning, it is without hate. When he says it to the murderer he is filled with hate. Now Harry is a professional, and in both cases he knows whether or not he has a bullet.

*You considered Audie Murphy for the role of the killer in **Dirty Harry**.*

Yes. I was looking for a killer, and here's the killer of all time, a war hero who killed over 250 people. I thought it might be interesting. He had never really played a killer. The reason he didn't get the part was that the studio didn't go for it, didn't think he was a good enough actor, although it seemed to me that all he really had to do was waltz through it. It would have been the easiest part of his life.

END

The Epic Cinema of Kurosawa

by Joan Mellen

Despite film's predilection for making physical reality itself transparent, "redeeming" it for our heightened awareness, as Sigfried Kracauer has said, many serious directors have tried to go beyond film as an extension of photography and achieve an epic quality in their cinema. Few have succeeded in reflecting a world-view which encompasses an entire society, an achievement that writers like Fielding and Tolstoy managed so well for the novel. The films of Akira Kurosawa have been seriously ignored by critics who favor more simplistically avant-garde directors like Fellini, Godard, Antonioni and Resnais. Even Luis Bunuel has called Kurosawa's work "superficial." Yet in the contemporary film only Kurosawa, in the tradition of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, has treated the epic as a dynamic, modern form. The epic appropriate to our time, as Brecht defines it, is a work centered around a human being who "is alterable and able to alter," whose thought has been determined by social being, and which appeals to the spectator only to "arouse his capacity for action" and "force him to take decisions" by "facing something." Kurosawa's conception of the epic comes close to Brecht's.

If Kurosawa's films seem more old-fashioned than Godard's, it is because he employs a more conventional narrative mode and because he is concerned with man's capacity to perform moral acts. Ironically more than any other major director, he resembles Bunuel. Bunuel tests the devotion of his people to moral principles by placing them in a world made grotesque by greed and rapacity. The paradigms of his hero are Nazarin and Viridiana, who are both finally defeated in their attempts to devote their lives to a suffering humanity. Their deepest sacrifices are only resented by their charges, and make no impact on the brutalizing conditions afflicting them. Neither can Kurosawa's hero, armed only with his own higher humanity, alter the direction of his society. This marks Kurosawa's adaptation of the epic genre to a world-view which finds individual acts in themselves of marginal consequence.

Kurosawa's hero lives in a period when men perceive that the social order is undergoing sudden structural change. Half of his films, in the tradition of the "history," occur at the moment of the fall of a great dynasty, like the Tokugawas in 1860. His characters find themselves displaced from the social status and function they had assumed permanent. They discover that they cannot live in harmony with the corrupt and unjust system which has supplanted the old order. Frequently a member of the ruling class, the hero finds that he can no longer ignore the needs of those less fortunate than himself, and that he must sacrifice his privilege and security.

In the films of Kurosawa, men are constantly shown capable of actions beyond their self-interest. These actions take place when individuals transcend the limitations of their personality and circumstances. They can be, however, only very limited in their scope. Because the alcoholic doctor in **Drunken Angel** (1948) is only one man striving against evil that has been institutionalized, his successes can never attack the causes of injustice, but only its symptoms. He can cure a little girl of tuberculosis, but he cannot rid the neighborhood of the swamp which breeds the disease infecting the entire population. (The image of this swamp predominates in the *mise en scène*.) Neither can he save the young gangster spawned by this milieu and incapable of freeing himself from it.

Kurosawa's doctor becomes the paradigm of the socially useful man, a breed diminishing in number. The doctor of **Red Beard** (1965) can attract only one disciple willing to work in a clinic and tend to the poor. Seven samurai can still be induced to defend, without pay, a peasant village from marauding bandits (**Seven Samurai**, 1954) but their triumph is undermined by their own extinction as a class.

Kurosawa portrays a social structure that is unfair and ruthless without making his films too narrowly topical. It is true that his Prince Myshkin in **The Idiot** (1951) and the young detective in **Stray Dog** (1949) have had to find new means of survival in their changed society after returning very specifically from the Second World War, but they could have found themselves jobless and alone during any period of historical upheaval. To treat a contemporary social conflict carries the danger of being either too polemical or didactic. Like Brecht, who frequently for this very reason set his works in the distant past or in far-away places, Kurosawa strives to use the historical to achieve a more universally compelling sociological approach. He also shares with Brecht the creation of characters who learn a strong class sense from the dilemma of their social alienation. However, he does not affect fashionable "Brechtian" detachment from his subject matter but, rather, he conveys an abiding sympathy with the less fortunate of his characters.

Defying an oppressive social order, Kurosawa's heroes invariably jeopardize their positions. Their generosity goes unrecognized and their motives are impugned. Generally, because the pressure to preserve their status is so strong, only through the compulsion of a personal crisis can they desire to make meaningful moral choices. In **Ikiru** (1952) Watanabe (Takashi Shimura), the only bureau chief at the City Hall who has the moral strength to challenge an inert bureaucracy, is doomed by gastric cancer. His decision to build a playground for slum children and his consequent deviation from the norm of filing away the endless petitions without acting on them excites suspicion. No one else in the government is willing to take responsibility for a project not properly belonging to his "section." The enthusiasm of Watanabe's successor to follow his example is short-lived. Good intentions are stifled before the endless stacks of paper at the City Hall which make up the *mise en scène*, before the staggering power of bureaucratic routine. Cinematically, Kurosawa illustrates how communication between co-workers is at a minimum by framing his characters with bundles of paper so high that they must speak without actually seeing each other. Watanabe's cancer brought him a new consciousness of his moral obligations; the cancerous society he sought to improve is ultimately unchanged by his example.

In the cinema of Kurosawa there is always a struggle between a well-meaning individual and an evil collective which expresses its selfish nature in the crushing economic conditions inflicted upon his characters. The Kyoto of **Rashomon** has been devastated by famine and civil war as has the Edo (old Tokyo) of **The Lower Depths**. In this society "you must be born to it to be somebody," says the actor in **The Lower Depths**. It is a world in which, as the landlord, the symbol of oppression, puts it, "kindness is one thing. Debt is another." It is a closed society, and despite the lies the inhabitants of the lower depths tell themselves, it is true that "sweat and toil" would not be sufficient to change their condition. It is a world inexplicable to its victim: "I've never had a decent meal," says the dying wife of the callous tinker, "What have I done?"

Within the context of a society in which history seems frozen because changing events bring no relief to the oppressed, Kurosawa's heroes set out to live morally. As the wife of the executed communist in one of his early films, **No Regrets For Our Youth** (1946), puts it, the quest is "to find out what it is to live." "Ikiru" itself means "to live." This film makes clear that only when the dying Watanabe questions the routine of his work and focusses instead on performing meaningful moral acts does he begin to know what it means "to live." Here Kurosawa adds a dimension to his world-view necessary to the epic and absent from such semi-epic novelists as Hemingway and Conrad, both of whom despair of finding a moral imperative and accept technical skill as a substitute for the pursuit of humane choices. What adds epic scope to Kurosawa's films is that he is not satisfied with a formula such as Hemingway's "holding of purity of line through the maximum of exposure" to danger or Conrad's devotion to "duty" in the face of the need for moral responses.

The epic quality of Kurosawa's films comes in his representation of a hero larger than life, a moral individual recognizable as a social

High and Low

Yojimbo

type. He may appear as a detective in modern society (**Stray Dog**), a samurai declassé (**Seven Samurai**, **Yojimbo**, **Sanjuro**), an industrialist (**I Live In Fear**, **High and Low**) or a dedicated doctor (**The Quiet Duel**, **Drunken Angel**, **Red Beard**). These heroes confront circumstances which question the moral rectitude of the social role that they have taken for granted throughout their lives. The best of them attempt to rectify a life of tacit assent to injustice. They sacrifice their hard-earned respectability and economic security. But only in transcending norms they have accepted unquestioningly do they become, in Kant's sense, rational or moral agents.

In **I Live In Fear** (1955) Kiichi Nakajima finally, in desperation, burns down his foundry to force his recalcitrant family to move to Brazil. His object is to save them all from an imagined imminent annihilation through nuclear attack. What touches off his insanity is not his obsessive fear of the atom bomb, as his family maintains, but the accusation by his foreman after the fire: "You don't mind even if we starve?" Nakajima suddenly perceives that his seeming moral concern was only for his immediate family and falls at the feet of his workers: "My error. Forgive me ... I was wrong to think only of ourselves. We must all survive." That he cannot, through escape, save the collective Japanese society as a whole, workers as well as his own extended family, defines him as a hero appropriate to the epic. It marks his defeat as well. Nakajima goes mad because he can neither break with his society nor change it. His understanding of the necessity to save all was the measure of his moral strength; it was also the anvil of his dilemma. Neither by staying nor by leaving could he see how to prevent unthinkable disaster.

Kurosawa's hero learns to be responsible for the needs of the larger community. Watanabe who builds a playground becomes, literally, the Chief of the "Citizens' Section." The Woodcutter in **Rashomon** redeems himself after he has lied about the rape and murder he has witnessed when he takes home an infant abandoned at the Rashomon Gate: "I have six children of my own. One more won't make it any more difficult."

A decision to evaluate the morality of his privileged existence and to appreciate the needs of others is the decisive act of Gondo, the wealthy industrialist of **High and Low**. His financial ruin begins not when his chauffeur's son is kidnapped by a dope addict in place of his own. It occurs, in fact, when he refuses to make cheap shoes that will wear out sooner than the old model. Ominous wailing music has accompanied the listing of the credits, and is heard again when Gondo opens the door of his house. It reflects the alien force, the reality of the outside world, soon to disturb his orderly and prosperous life, symbolized by the ornate clock on his mantel which chimes behind him as he waits for the telephone call on which he has "bet his whole future" in an attempt to gain control of the corporation.

Gondo uses the money with which he would have bought controlling shares in the factory to ransom the boy. This act eventually proves to be a blessing. It introduces him to his own character, and returns him to his early values, long since abandoned in the quest for wealth. As in **Ikiru** and **Rashomon**, the good man becomes animated and truly alive only when he is given the possibility of moral commitment. The son of dentist Harada in **I Live In Fear** is amused by his father's excitement whenever he receives a call from the Domestic Court asking him to serve as a mediator on a case, and the theme of this film, in part, is Harada's attempt to understand the nature of Nakajima's obsession with atomic bombs. Harada is finally the most reluctant of the three to accept the family's petition: "Aren't we worried about H-Bombs ourselves? It's a feeling all of us Japanese have."

Another measure of the goodness of a man in Kurosawa's films is the degree to which he is able to form compassionate relationships with others and to make these a primary loyalty. He is never ironic in his admiration of the warmth with which some men can respond to each other. Three examples come to mind. Nishi, the hero of **The Bad Sleep Well** (1960), learns to love the lame girl whom he had married to avenge his father's murder by the girl's father. Sanjuro Kuwabatake (**Yojimbo**, 1961), seemingly a homeless *yojimbo* (bodyguard), is genuinely sorry for the young family he befriends, although his ethic demands that he show no emotion. The most winning of the seven samurai is easily Kikuchiyo, who becomes a peasant once more as he trains the farmers to defend themselves, and it is he who delightedly gives away the white rice reserved for the samurai to the hungry children.

The affection of the Kurosawa hero is always demonstrative and unabashed. Kurosawa never extols the good thought separated from the good action. He refuses to sanction the dilemma of the "noble" mind ambivalent about taking an action that would make him less than "pure." For this reason his films do not seem "intellectual" or "modern." Unlike Bergman, he never leaves an emotion in its abstract state, but quickly translates it into action. The plots of his films, dealing as they do, in the epic manner, with moments of crisis, make decisions imperative for his characters. Kambei in **Seven Samurai** has no time to feel *angst* over his fallen state: he must decide whether or not to help the peasant village. The young doctor in **Red Beard**, just graduated from the famed Nagasaki medical center, must decide whether or not he is really "too good for the clinic" of people "full of fleas[who] even smell bad." Kurosawa's heroes themselves synthesize the "personal" with the "public" role; they discover themselves only when they reflect upon what they have done. The sense of self becomes inseparable from judgement of their acts.

In **High and Low** the epic hero is a man at once obvious to the audience as larger than life. He is played by Toshiro Mifune who is taller than most Japanese and more physically robust. Gondo (Mifune) is pitted against social oppression and comes to the recognition that it is society which drove mad his antagonist, the young kidnapper. The police are only his ostensible allies. In their thirst for revenge they are as different from him, in any moral sense, as he is from the depraved kidnapper.

In his casting, Kurosawa creates an exceptionally strong physical resemblance between Gondo and his young "right-hand man," Kawanishi. In so doing, he contrasts their moral responses to the crisis. Kawanishi betrays Gondo's plot to gain control of the company to the other executives. Recognizing that Gondo's hesitancy will cost him his own chance, Kawanishi refuses to go to Osaka to close the deal. Further, Kurosawa suggests that Gondo's decision to take responsibility for the life of the boy is rooted in his earlier experience as a poor craftman who had to struggle for his survival.

Evil for Kurosawa exists not only within individuals. The arrival of the police institutionalizes the evil done once they take control of the question of justice. If Kurosawa concentrated on the highly personal methods of Detective Sato in **Stray Dog** (1951), in **High and Low** (1963) he exposes a ruthlessly scientific police organization. Sato believed that it was appropriate to have sympathy only for the victim. His duty was to isolate and destroy the "mad dog" who threatened the welfare of the group. This moral limitation, the inability to see the humanity of the criminal, which Kurosawa treated objectively in the earlier film, is more subtly exposed in **High and Low**.

Kurosawa contrasts the outer courtesy and good will of Detective Tokura (Tatsuya Nakadai) with the real nature of his methods. His gentle sympathy for the boy's father, and later, for the ostracized Gondo, make him a figure seemingly on the side of good, almost a second hero. But Tokura shows no concern at all for the criminal. He dismisses him not as a "mad dog," but as the more modern equivalent, a "pathological case." The police deal only with effects, never with causes. Because they do not take into account one of the film's major concerns, the inequity between rich and poor, high and low, their point of view is called into question.

The criminal's first words to Gondo in his air-conditioned mansion

are "It's hot as hell down here." He embodies the failure of a society which permits one individual to live in a crowded tenement at the foot of a hill, and another in a palace at the top. Seeing Gondo's house reflected in the swamp below, even one of the policemen hunting the criminal says, "That house makes one sore, as if it's looking down on us." The next moment the white shirt of the kidnapper is reflected in the water as he approaches his hovel. His path is intercepted by a dog, a frequent symbol in Kurosawa for the degradation in which the poor are forced to live. Gondo becomes a hero because he responds to this inequity by agreeing to "start all over," becoming a shoemaker again as he sews the bag that will contain the ransom money.

For Kurosawa, Gondo is different because he is capable of moral examination of his way of life. The police, successful as they are, demonstrate a militaristic, one-sided, and unquestioning involvement in the pursuit of the criminal, whom they treat as if he were an animal. They are blind in the way that several of the minor characters are blind, dominated by what in the eighteenth century was called a "ruling passion." The conductor who can imitate the sound of the old streetcars used by the Enoden Company is interested in nothing else. The garbage collector couldn't care less about the search for the criminal, preoccupied as he is with his tin which will not burn.

Tokura is most guilty of this trait because in his concern for "justice," he includes no value for human life. He rejoices that the dead bodies of the kidnapper's accomplices have been found because the kidnapper can now receive capital punishment. "He must not be arrested," Tokura insists before the discovery, "for he will get only fifteen years." One consequence of his refusal to capture the kidnapper without proof that he is guilty of murder is the death of a helpless girl. Even at the end Tokura will not allow the kidnapper to commit suicide, but must bring him in alive to receive the death penalty.

Success for the police in a corrupt society means the absence of justice. The causes of the criminal's act go unredressed. In the final sequences at the prison, Gondo is behind a glass. The criminal's face is reflected in his. This compares with the final scene in **Stray Dog** where the young detective and the killer fall exhausted, indistinguishable from each other on a field of flowers. One could have been the other. Gondo asks the kidnapper who has tried to ruin his life, "Were you so unfortunate?" The killer, startled at Gondo's moral resiliency, is carried off screaming. Gondo's decency has confronted him with his own baseness. Gondo survives, bereft of his possessions, but like Watanabe in **Ikiru**, redeemed. The callous society, epitomized by the police, remains to create new victims, uninfluenced by Gondo's example of moral rectitude. **High and Low** might be considered the typical Kurosawa film. At its center is the good man, as heroic as an individual who must invariably act alone can be. In the background is a struggle between classes growing out of an unjust social structure.

If the hero can no longer, by his inner strength, influence the direction of his society, it takes all the integrity he retains not to be corrupted by its ruthless values. In **Throne of Blood** (1957), Kurosawa's version of **Macbeth**, Washizu, enticed by the prospect of greater power and wealth, and its corollary, the fear of losing what he has, is justly murdered at the end by his own people — one of the few emendations Kurosawa makes on the original.

The plot of the Kurosawa film frequently involves the confrontation of the good man with a social order straining under the weight of class tensions and inequities during a period of change. **Men Who Tread On The Tiger's Tail** (1945), with its depiction of traditional feudal relationships, focusses upon the fact that the society is disintegrating. Yoshitsune, the lord in disguise, is escaping from his enemies, including his own brother. He survives because Yogashi, the policeman at the border, allows him to pass. Benkei, his servant, has dared to transcend feudal bounds in an attempt to divert the enemy's suspicions. At the last moment, when they are about to be discovered, he beats Yoshitsune, accusing him of being an incompetent carrier. Their enemies then seem satisfied: "No vassal would strike his master." It is "an unforgivable sin." Even as they escape detection, the image of their stratagem epitomizes the fall of the class.

The most pronounced of these transitional periods occurs with the overthrow of the Tokugawa dynasty in 1860, bringing with it the fall of feudalism and the rise of the middle class. Displaced during this period of upheaval is the samurai, now out of work. It is through the figure of the wandering samurai declassé that Kurosawa is able to show the ambiguous relationship between the fate of the individual and the fate of his society.

At his best, the samurai, personified by the leader Kambei in **Seven Samurai**, disinterestedly dedicates himself to the protection of others, even after he himself has lost the protection of his old feudal master. No longer attached to a feudal lord, he must now struggle for his individual survival. The "purest" of these samurai attempt to adhere to their old, noble ideals. Kambei sacrifices his pride and shaves his braid, the last vestige of his samurai identity, to save a baby who has been kidnapped by a local thief. We are prepared thus for his later willingness to risk his life in defense of a peasant village besieged by bandits who, in a time of scarcity, have resorted to exploiting the local peasantry.

The true victors at the end of the endless series of attacks and counter-attacks, according to Kambei, are not the surviving samurai, but the peasants. Kikuchiyo, the peasant samurai, has called the farmers "foxy beasts." Kurosawa shows that the "duplicity" of the peasantry is a function of its need to survive as a class. Only when Kikuchiyo rings the danger bell are the peasants willing even to greet the samurai whom they have summoned, and they have hidden food to make their plight seem worse. Yet Kurosawa does not condemn them for their craftiness. Kikuchiyo turns on the samurai who are horrified by this lack of gratitude: "Who made them such beasts? You samurai did it. You burn their villages, take their women, force them to labour." "I hate all wretched people," Kikuchiyo concludes. In not being able to bear the pain of their suffering, he is speaking for the director.

The peasants resume their rice-growing, continuing their primary role as food-producers. At first they refused to "protect someone else's house when you can't protect your own," and had to be taught better by Kambei. Despite their egocentricity, they stand at the heart of this epic because the fate of the society and their fate come together at the end. The motif of the samurai more properly belongs to the tragic genre. The samurai face extinction because their function has not, as a whole, been the protection of the common good. Morally superior to the egocentric peasants, the deaths of these particular samurai are tragic, although the death of the class is not.

Six years later, in the satire **Yojimbo** (1961), Kurosawa shows with much more bitterness the moral chaos attendant upon the fall of the old order and the rise of a ruthless and materialistic middle class surrounded by a lumpen proletariat which lives off its crimes. Two equally unscrupulous factions vie for economic control of a town, to be plagued by a down-and-out samurai who can return law and order only by slaying a majority of the citizenry. Kurosawa traces the rise of the middle class by moving his scenario from a rural to an urban setting.

The samurai's day is over. This is portrayed first by his rags and fleas, which he is forever scratching, and more importantly, by the gun of his special adversary, Unosuke. The rise of technology itself marks the decline of the warrior class. Modern weaponry does not require the particular strength or skill of the assailant. Neither the peasantry nor the small urban middle class has any need for this samurai. The peasant he meets at the beginning shuts the door on him, muttering, "The smell of blood brings the hungry dogs." In town, a dog runs by with a human hand in his mouth, symbolic of the dehumanization which has set in with the fall of the old order and the institution of ruthless competition for wealth. The undertaker is besieged by orders for coffins. His hammer drowns out all conversation.

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Sanshiro Sugata, 1943
The Most Beautiful (Ichiban Utsukushiku), 1944
Sanshiro Sugata (part two), 1945
Men Who Step On the Tiger's Tail (Tora no O o Fumu Otokotachi), 1945
Those Who Make Tomorrow (Asu o Tsukuru Hitobito), 1946
No Regrets For Our Youth (Waga Seishun ni Kuinashi), 1946
One Wonderful Sunday (Subarashiki Nichiyobi), 1947
Drunken Angel (Yoidore Tenshi), 1948
The Quiet Duel (Shizukanaru Ketto), 1949
Stray Dog (Nora Inu), 1949
Scandal (Shuban), 1950
Rashomon, 1950
The Idiot (Hakuchi), 1951
Ikiru, 1952
Seven Samurai (Shichinin no Samurai), 1954
I Live In Terror (Ikimono no Kiroku), 1955
Throne of Blood (Kumonosu-jo), 1957
The Lower Depths (Donzoko), 1957
The Hidden Fortress (Kakushi Toride no San-Akunin), 1958
The Bad Sleep Well (Warui Yatsu Hodo Yoku Nemuru), 1960
Yojimbo, 1961
Sanjuro, 1962
High and Low (Tenoguku to Jigoku), 1963
Red Beard (Akahige), 1965
Dodeskaden, 1970

"Better if all these men were dead," says the samurai. The old, humane sake seller, who eventually survives, is at first shocked by this proposal: "Get out ... you and your crazy ideas." At the end, with everyone dead, the samurai says with pride in his swordsmanship that "It'll be quiet in this town." It is only the sheerest mishap that prevents Unosuke from shooting him before dying. The samurai, defying the coming of the new order which would make his courage obsolete, allows the wounded man his gun. His gesture is a last but futile affirmation of the feudal code.

In the sequel to **Yojimbo**, **Sanjuro** (1962), the "horse-faced" but honest chamberlain is restored to power. Characteristically, he shows little gratitude toward the aging samurai who has saved him, and whom he now fears as a rival. The samurai is on the road once more, a "sword" who will perish, because as the chamberlain's wife has said, he does not know when to stay in his scabbard. Kurosawa offers no assurance against further outbreaks, in the town, of civil disorder and rapacity. The samurai leaves for future random encounters, one of which is certain to claim his life.

Kurosawa allows his camera to impart his theme. He refuses didacticism or facile allegory. The unjust social structure is depicted. It breeds an Aeschylian revenge upon revenge: police upon criminal, ruling faction upon its opposition, outcast upon the "respectable." Within the composition of a single shot, at the beginning of the last scene of **High and Low**, Kurosawa conveys that "crime" is but the result of an unjust distribution of comfort. The camera is lowered to the level and assumes the vantage of the janitors of the city prison, bent on hands and knees, washing the floors of the prison corridors in the early morning. They stop work to bow when Gondo and Tokura pass by. As they bow, the camera looks upward. Kurosawa embellishes the image of the prison janitors he must have borrowed from the final scene of Curtiz' **Mildred Pierce** (1945). The impression of the irreconcilability of classes is fixed.

A similar shot appears in **Throne of Blood** when Duncan pays a visit to the castle of Washizu early in the film. The procession of nobility passes in single file between the bowed heads of the peasants working in Washizu's fields. Later, when Washizu returns the corpse of his master to the palace, the bowed, weeping servants fill the screen, subservient to the dead master as they were to the living. Still later, the servants, with growing consciousness, remark that "The foundations have long been rotting." With Washizu in power they suddenly feel insecure: "I cannot believe that this castle is as strong as it was." One reports that the rats have begun to leave, another that no lords have come to pay homage to Washizu. The voices of these vassals provide a choral commentary on the morality of the nobility in this film, climaxed by the murder of Washizu by arrows shot from a sea of anonymous faces, his own subjects.

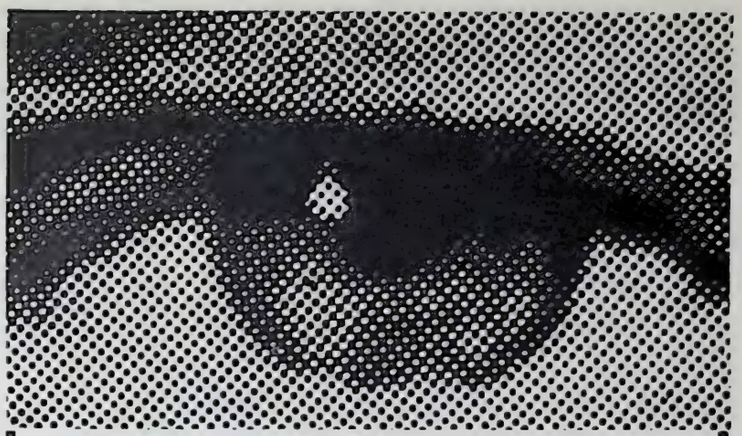
Grafting one of the oldest genres, the epic, with its strong emphasis on the moral, onto the newest of the arts, Kurosawa uses a traditional narrative structure to pose essential moral questions. His films rarely experiment with time in a Proustian manner, nor do they, like the films of Antonioni (whom Kurosawa admires), withhold information necessary to the viewer's understanding. **Seven Samurai** is superficially an adventure melodrama of the destruction of bandits and the victory of the peasants. **High and Low** rises to two climaxes typical of the *roman policier* (George Simenon is one of Kurosawa's favorite novelists): the safe return of the kidnapped boy and the police dragnet closing in on the kidnapper.

Kurosawa's films, like nineteenth-century novels, are told in the third person, maintaining the objectivity which early novelists thought essential to verisimilitude. Like the old epic storytellers, he is confident of the truths his films impart. Primarily moral in their outlook, his films, as he says, "keep saying the same thing over and over again. Why, I ask, is it that human beings cannot get along with each other? Why can't they live with each other with more good will?" As Enoken, the poor carrier the nobles pick up along the way in **Men Who Tread On The Tiger's Tail**, asks, "Why can't two brothers not quarrel?" The nobility are embarrassed by his question.

Unlike the earlier creators of the epic, Kurosawa ends, not in praise of a permanence achieved through the efforts of the hero, but with the haunting suggestion that his heroes have been able to do little to redeem their social order, and that if profound structural changes are not forthcoming, chaos will result. Through the deeds of his heros, who appear as large as Ulysses or Aeneas, he points a way: concern for the less fortunate, kindness, tolerance, and repudiation of materialism, ambition and greed. Kurosawa does not anticipate the society capable of fulfilling these values. He rests with a moral vision which, he implies, is the perpetual concern of men — without which degeneration and suffering will never cease.

END

Joan Mellen is an assistant professor of English at Philadelphia's Temple University. Her writing has also appeared in Film Quarterly *and* Cineaste.



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Contra Pappy

When Brian Boru lay dying
a host of bowels hounded him to his grave;
the floating heads of defeated legions
encircled his bed, sneering, grizzly-jowelled.

When Brian Boru lay dying
he trembled in remorseful impotence
and his soul mounted with unredeeming
trepidation to Valhalla's corner;

When Brian Boru lay dying
was there then a John Ford by his bedside
to gaze upon the shivering hero?—
to say "When fact and fiction don't quite jive,
print the legend." Was there then a John Ford
to assure the future martyrs dead in
Londonderry their merrie melodies?

Laurence Smith

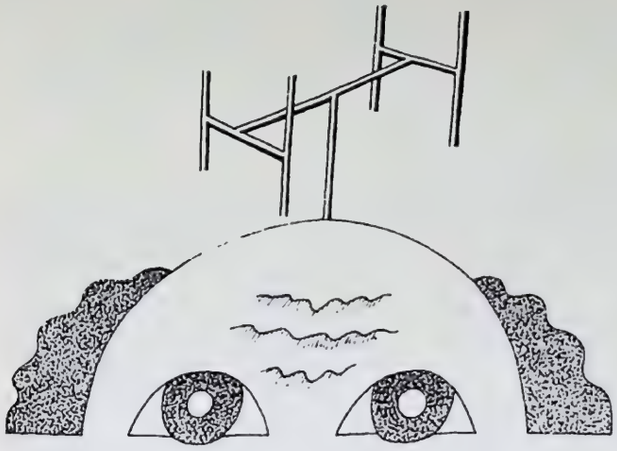
On Women Finding Employment in the Film Industry

have you
ever
thought
of yourself
as an archeologist
with
orange
hair?

NEVER
if
you
haven't got a beard
they make you
carry the shovels.

Freude

ILLUSTRATION: SUE SCOTT



Troubles with T.V.

by David R. Bunch

My friend was sure a strange one. But I guessed he was just a product of the times; I didn't know how else to explain it. You see, he acted like a human television set. Oh, I don't mean you could ever sit down in front of him and see the Bonanza gang or watch a heavyweight defend his title. He didn't make with the pictures like that, see. Not for the public. But he had them. He could receive, but he couldn't give out he told me, and it gave him no end of troubles.
We were a couple of young dogs, about twenty-some and didn't have any wives, so when something big was coming up on TV we'd just light out for the cheapest, darkest dive we could think of and try to get plastered before the program went on the air. It seemed to help him if we could get drunk early in a small, dark bar that had no TV set.

Ordinary TV didn't bother him so much. It was the big things, when the public was all excited too. Why, those Bonanza boys could gallop every night across their tumbleweeds and it wouldn't bother my friend much. Maybe he'd say something like, "Wish Old Hoss would put rubber shoes on that old horse," just to let me know he was receiving, and I could see he had minor stomach discomforts. But let something big come up. Like the All Star baseball game, for instance. Then he'd have stomach cramps like nobody's stomach cramps. You see he'd get the whole thing right through his body because; as far as I could see, he was the human TV receiving set and no help for it.

Why, just imagine yourself how it would be if through some trick of nature you were set up just right to receive the excitement of television during all your thinking hours. Think of the things that could be tearing through your body and mind during your every waking moment. And you couldn't escape it! Because TV is in the air, you know. Something like people used to think God was, all around us. How would you like to have big old John Wayne on a cow horse chase a stampede through your liver some rainy night about eight o'clock in the Early Show? Or Dark Dickie Nixon brag how the State of the Union under him was perfectly clear, just great, and glare, with gestures? RIGHT THROUGH YOUR BELLY! Huh? Just pictures, you know, but how'd you like it?

And now you begin to see what it was like, what my friend was going through, don't you? And you understand why I was sorry for him, don't you? Even if you don't know that I'm just a simple, good-hearted fellow anyway, and that I never got past the ninth grade in all my twenty-some years. But just because I didn't go for a Ph. D., that shouldn't hinder my heart, should it? So when my friend complained that Durante's nose bothered him, or he wished they'd shave them fuzzy puppets, I never doubted. I knew! I knew he was receiving, and it was just like a hen having a bunch of old Gillette blues in her when she should have been having eggs.

I remember it was the All Star baseball game, the one they were holding in Chicago. I knew we'd go drinking that day, about game time, because I'd seen my friend go through these difficult days before. He seemed to feel every pitch, every hit, every fielding play, every cut of the spikes as those big guys ran bases. On top of all this, he was a real dyed-in-the-park baseball fan. Or he had been, before he became such a TV.

I remember how he was telling the play-by-play as we sipped our suds, and I pumped my yo-yo and arranged my Batman cutouts. He was making efforts of pain with his face, and rubbing his stomach hard to let me know how it hurt when the pictures of all that action tore through him. I was listening and drinking and suffering with him. Because I liked my friend, at that time, and I wasn't missing the game anyway. I knew his play-by-play would check out all right with the sports headlines later in the evening dailies.

And now I guess you're wondering where my friend is, and why we're not out getting stinko drunk because of this important Super Bowl football slaughter frolic that's coming up. Well, I hate to say it, but he's finally in the hospital, poor old friend. No, he didn't blow his picture tube. Not the way you mean it.

You see, it was this baseball game, the one they were holding that year in Chicago. And a kind of fast-baller, I forget his name, had just come in for the Americans along in the ending stages, and my friend was making with the hysterics, as though it was that Feller pitching, years ago, with his bullet ball you read about in the old record book histories. Then, all-at-once-like, a strange look comes over my friend's face, and he quits reporting the game. He quits making with the excitement and the suffering that these great events can cause. He just quits everything and looks startled and starts hitting at a place over his heart, which would be his shirt pocket, and fiddling at a patch of his hair. Why, if I hadn't known my friend so well, I'd have thought, on top of a big heart attack, he had lost all his connections to his senses. At it was, I just thought for sure he had hornets in his hair and his Van Heusen. And maybe he did, because he let out a yelp and a squeal and headed for the front of this cheap-dive bar where the fat, sweaty bartender had a small radio set turned up kind of low and personal-like to this All Star baseball contest.

Yes, as I said, he was sure a good TV, except for the pictures . . . Huh? You want to know why my friend's in the hospital? Well, because I hit him over the head with an empty beer bottle, that's why.
Why did I do that? Because he left me in the last of the ninth of this All Star baseball game, the one in Chicago, with the score tied, the bases loaded, a new relief pitcher just come in, a three-two count on the final-out batter . . . and no TV!

David R. Bunch has been writing mainstream fiction, science fiction and poetry for a number of years. He has appeared in innumerable anthologies, and nearly all of the sf magazines. Moderan, his most recent book, was published in May, 1971 by Avon Books.

The Other Cinema

by André Pâquet

The last decade has seen the coming of age of cinema as a true cultural expression. More and more this new attitude toward filmmaking has led to the unmasking of a fundamental contradiction which André Malraux defined when he declared that cinema is also an industry. Existing monopolies, whether capitalistic or state-owned (in the socialist countries), "manufacture" an alienating form of cinema which, in most cases, exploits taboos, obsessions, or nostalgia, and is aimed only at "production"—production which perpetuates the status quo of society. In almost every country, cinema is first an industry—an industry controlled by the dominating class (in the capitalistic countries, by the big U.S. corporations: in the socialist ones, by the new red bourgeoisie). In all our countries cinema is tolerated only as long as it does not endanger the establishment. Thus, we have the control of cinema by commerce, industry and the banks, or, in the socialist countries, by layers of bureaucracy.

If this last decade has seen the very concept of film change radically, it has also been witness to a new approach in production methods. In most countries, and simultaneously, a new awareness of film has developed. The French New Wave and the Free Cinema of Great Britain's angry-young-men-of-films, were the first to show the way to a social consciousness in the cinema. But because these movements were not a part of a more global action to change the very structures of the film industry, they were quickly recuperated by that same industry. It was in the smaller film producing countries that the crisis became more acute. Having no big industry to fight, but facing the same common enemy (i.e., the distribution/exploitation aspect) they faced total oblivion unless they received government help. But it was soon apparent that this "help" was only given to quiet down tempers. In other words, in most countries (Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Canada, etc. . .) the governments sponsored film funds—financing, development corporations or societies—but consolidated the imperialistic control of the existing distribution outlets by the U.S. corporations. Thus, these last ten years or so have brought all filmmakers to a similar awareness of the fact that the key problem which New Cinema is facing is that of distribution. Only by creating new ways of distributing films can we fight to change cinema.

With the coming aboveground of the underground movement, with its failure to change anything in the structures of the industry as a whole, and with its experimental approach centered on the aesthetics of film rather than its ethic content, there was only one issue left to the independent filmmakers: the Alternative cinema. Working within a strictly non-commercial area, the Alternative cinema would fight the system on its own grounds—in the theaters. It would propose a new attitude towards film distribution (let's call it diffusion) and film exhibition (instead of exploitation). In Europe, many of these movements have developed over the past three or four years, each different from the others in that it was created to find a solution to the problem as it exists in each particular country.

In London, The Other Cinema was initiated by a group of filmmakers dissatisfied with the type of films they were obliged to make within the existing system. The group was also created to allow diffusion of independent films, for which there are very limited outlets in Britain, as well as films of any kind made outside the system. In London, last June, I talked with Nick Hart-Williams and Peter Sainsbury of The Other Cinema.

What is The Other Cinema?

Williams: It's an exhibition/diffusion organization formed on a non-profit-making basis. But from the start, I think one must understand the situation in which it arose. There is a very strong monopoly in this country, a monopoly which is owned by two companies (Rank & A.B.C.). This monopoly controls all distribution/exploitation of films in London, and in the rest of England as well. While these companies are not directly engaged in the distribution of independent films, their influence is so strong that it is felt all through the industry—to the extent that the independent cinema owners, of necessity, have to rely on this monopoly to supply them with films. Consequently, there is virtually no chance for independent film producers and/or distributors to get their films on in 90 percent of the cinemas of this country. And that is why we started trying to do something about that situation.

But why this formula in particular?

Sainsbury: What formula? That's just what we are looking for right now. But maybe we should tell how it all happened, chronologically. Actually the movement originated with people connected with the Institute of Contemporary Arts, in London. These people got the idea that something had to be done to increase the showing of films blandly labelled "uncommercial" by the established trade. The first step in that direction was to get together a meeting of British filmmakers, which included people like Losey, Albert Finney, Richard Lester, Tony Garnett and Harold Pinter, to talk about the problem. From this meeting, and others which followed, it was somehow imagined, at that time, that it was possible to work out an alternative distribution system using existing cinemas. Quite a large number of cinemas are not part of the Rank or A.B.C. distribution circuit. We thought that not only would it be possible to work out a circuit on that basis, but also that this circuit would, in some sense, finance production. But that was purely pie-in-the-sky, for various obvious reasons. Ever since then we have been groping around for a more appropriate formula to the situation here. Since the situation is just as tight as Nick described it, that formula has been hard to come by. Then came a committee of people interested in acting in that sense: *to create a genuine and pragmatic attempt to restore the autonomy of the British cinema and to increase the number of international films in distribution.* One of these people was Nick, who was then programming films at the ICA. Towards the end of that summer, which was the summer of 69, I found myself in London looking for a job. These committees decided that they wanted somebody to work on this idea full time. Nick quit the ICA, and we decided to go ahead with putting some of these thoughts into practice. That really became possible when we discovered a place in London which we could rent to show films on a fairly regular basis. We did that from February until September last year. But the difficulty there was that we had trouble in building any kind of continuity. The last program we did there, which we called the Edinburgh-Festival-In-London, was quite successful. But that was the end of our time there.

Williams: Another major problem we had there was that we could not rent from the majors (Note: In England, some of the majors like 20th, Warners, MGM, Paramount, Rank and A.B.C., purchase some independently produced films which they occasionally show as slow-period-plugs). Because it was not a licensed cinema, it did not qualify in terms of building rules, and everything else. Then one of our trustees bought out the Rank-Odeon at King's Cross which had closed the previous August. They decided to run a "Sex Film Club" in the daytime (because that's one of his businesses), but he let us have the cinema for the evenings, at quite a reasonable rent. So that made it possible for us to approach the majors. Although they have an agreement with Rank-A.B.C., they do have films which, for one reason or another, they have decided not to release. **Battle of Algiers** was one of these, and we chose it to start with. It ran for eight weeks.

Since we are still on that subject of exhibition, how are films programmed in England?

Williams: Well, this is one of the major manifestations of this monopoly. Rank and A.B.C. own about a third of the British cinemas. The first stage is for them to open a film in London's West-End. But they tend to be less willing to open a film in London if it doesn't have a

tie-up nation-wide release afterwards. If it does, the next stage is that it goes out on general London release. Then it goes on national release in the same manner. Then the independents come in to assure a third release all over the country.

What is the relationship between Rank, A.B.C., and the big U.S. corporations?

Williams: All the American studios have contracts with one or the other. Both of them are British-owned, but they have very firm agreements. Anyway, it's all part of a vertical organization—production, distribution, exploitation. And they all have the same criteria: nothing in foreign languages or subtitles. Which excludes quite a number of films.

What has been your relationship with the filmmakers up to now, outside of that original meeting?

Sainsbury: At the moment our relationship is mainly with people like Steven Dwoskin, David Larcher, Peter Withehead, whose films we distribute. But we keep in direct contact with other groups, like the Film Coops, The Electric Cinema, The Politkino.

Williams: We've only just reached the stage where we can be of any use to people beyond the "personal filmmakers" and we must take into account that, because of the situation as I described it, there is not the same healthy filmmaking scene that you have in Quebec, for instance, or even in France or in Germany, where there are legions of independent filmmakers. Here they virtually don't exist. There are very few of the Lefebvre's, or the Werner Herzog's, the Philippe Garrel's. Most of the Free Cinema movement has been gobbled up by the system. The Anderson's, Richardson's, Schlesinger's, Donner's and the others are now *Directors!*

It is a fact that in looking back over the last few years at what marked the evolution of the New Cinema movement, we find that the French New Wave and the Free Cinema were probably the first two new types of filmmaking to emerge in the last ten years. And we see that both were more or less annihilated by the system, and its power to feed on its own contradictions. The same thing happened to the Czech and the Yugoslav cinema, and will eventually happen in Canada as well.

Williams: I suppose, to some extent, it's bound to happen. Initially, filmmakers have to be independent because they are not "established". But once they become a success the offers come up, and a lot of them have ideas of making expensive films—and the only way they can do that is with the major studios. It's all part of the alienation of the system.

What kind of films is The Other Cinema particularly interested in?

Williams: Up to now we have concentrated on showing the films which were not getting shown in London. But within this optic we have tried to concentrate on political, social and experimental works. For instance, we distribute films like **Le Gai Savoir** and **British Sounds** by Godard and the Dziga Vertov group, **Ice** by Robert Kramer, **Even Dwarfs Started Small** by Werner Herzog, as well as anonymous **Cinetracts** and documents like **Urban Insurgency in Northern Ireland**. At the King's Cross we have shown our "repertory", plus films like **The Battle of Algiers**, **Brewster McCloud**, **Artists at the Top: Disoriented**. And we would like to be able to show films like **The Conformist**, **China Is Near**, and even like **A Walk With Love and Death** by Houston—but there are always some problems with the big boys. We also distribute two films by David Cronenberg, **Stereo** and **Crimes of the Future**.

Have you been active outside of London?

Sainsbury: We've always known that it would be local people who would serve as centers, who would actually have to do the work. There is no way in which we wanted to set up yet another London-controlled circuit. That wouldn't be, in any way, a release from what we already have. Needless to say it has proved extraordinarily difficult. One experiment has been to work with a University Festival, or a Festival like Edinburgh. Last year we put on a week of films in one of the small cinemas at Edinburgh. Also we've been helping with the Leeds students in the Northern Country, where there is a student population of about 15,000. We joined with them and did a week of late night showings. They were happy to cover the overhead, which was small, and they gave us the rest of what was taken. So we made approximately three times as much as we would have normally made out of ordinary bookings of the films.

How do you split with the filmmakers?

Williams: We usually split 50/50 with the filmmaker. In normal contracts, certain things are deductable before that split is made, the main item being publicity and promotion. The weakness of that situation for the filmmaker is that he has no proof whatsoever of what has actually been spent on these two items. We split 50/50, and the only thing that comes off the top is the print cost. So the filmmaker automatically gets 50 percent. He knows how much a print costs!

To come back to my previous question, how do you see these various experiments you have made fitting in with the necessity of going out of London?

Sainsbury: We are now able to build up a kind of federation of regional film exhibitors who are interested in what we do, and keen enough to cooperate with us to show some of the films that we distribute. The first of these is in Bristol, and it's working quite nicely. At the moment it's working on a small basis, two or three nights a week. They show our films, with a healthy mixture of films from other independent distributors. In Birmingham there is an Arts Laboratory where people have put together a cinema for themselves, with a small amount of money, and they show our films quite often.

Williams: I, at least, am beginning to be more and more convinced of the necessity of such an effort. One of the reasons we haven't set up a circuit around the country is that it takes a lot of time to find the right people. Also, we don't have the money to employ the people who have the time to do research, etc., etc. As an interim we are thinking of more of these Festivals that can go around, either through groups that are already operating in Universities, or Community Centers. Or we could get a van which would be properly equipped, and which could move into many towns and, within three hours, set up projection facilities. If we could do this it would answer several problems, because then we could get films around the country very quickly—not only in the cinemas and schools, but in factories, wherever the people are. If we are just using our material as distributors, we have to sit back and wait until people decide to use them. But if we can wheel it around the country it's a way of getting topical material around while it's still topical. It's also a way of reaching people in the various localities who might be interested in working with us.

If you open a film in London from one of the majors, will they automatically give you the opportunity to open it elsewhere?

Williams: No. By virtue of having the King's Cross cinema in London, we are considered a straightforward exhibitor. And we use that position to convince the majors to let us open films they normally wouldn't open otherwise. Of course, if we had other cinemas in the rest of the country, doubtless we could book **Battle of Algiers** in other cities. But we don't want to set up a chain similar to the existing ones.

At your cinemas (the ICA, the Place, and the King's Cross) did you have membership, is it a club or something?

Williams: All these places were public cinemas, which, if it was necessary or convenient, we could turn into clubs; for example if the films were showing without a certificate. A certificate costs £100 per feature. Right now we have a project with the Cubans. If this materializes we will have to show them as a club, because there will be half a dozen features in that!

Sainsbury: This situation is just one more of those little things which are hurting the independent, political cinemas. One hundred pounds is nothing to Mr. Rank or Mr. A.B.C., but it's a different story for the independent.

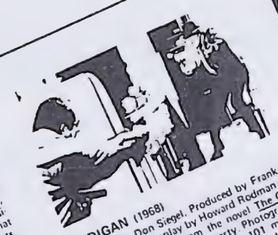
Although The Other Cinema has recently left the King's Cross location because of financial difficulties encountered by the owners, it may have found a new base at the Film Makers Co-op/Arts Lab building. There are plans to share the ground floor with a theatre group, and there is the possibility of using another London cinema too. Their efforts to show films in the provinces are bearing fruit too—the Birmingham group is doing well, and also the Bristol one. But the obstacles in the way of the distribution/exhibition of independent films make it sure that progress will be slow.

"So far, there has only been one way to make professional pictures—the wrong way . . . The people who run this industry have always been frightened. They have always avoided important themes, stayed well clear of political pictures . . . But the blame lies fairly and squarely with us . . . We have put up with these people, and played their game, according to their rules. We have collaborated to the point of extinction. We did nothing . . . to try to create a more rational system. We played along because it was easy and profitable. We had the industry we deserved — now we have the crisis we deserve." These words are those of Kevin Brownlow (in *Sight and Sound*, issue of Autumn, 1970). I think they sum up, rather explicitly, not only the situation in Britain, but in many other countries as well. Maybe now there *has* to be an alternative cinema!

END

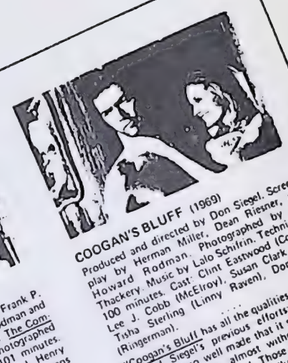
André Pâquet is Director of the Canadian Section of Montreal's Cinémathèque Québécoise. A Canada Council grant recipient, he is studying European cinémathèques and alternate distribution systems for films from the Third World. He currently lives in Amsterdam.

The Films of Don Siegel



DON SIEGEL The '40s and '50s were the heyday of the Grade-B action feature. Unheralded master-pieces like Gun Crazy, Kiss Me Deadly, The Enforcer, Phantom Lady, Detour, and The Big Heat were notable for their direct and economical translation of ideas into action and image with-out any intervening pomposity. In addition, these films expressed an astringent and pessi-mistic attitude toward American society that was usually filtered out in more costly projects. Today many critics feel that these films ex-pressed the true spirit of American cinema, rather than Academy Award fodder like Mrs. Miniver, The King and I, etc.

The action film is now dead, with one ex-ception — Don Siegel, the last of his breed. Siegel makes action films with a modern con-text: cool, alienated, and anti-heroic. John Baxter (The Gangster Film) calls Siegel the "dean of the modern cinema of action and violence." Manny Farber describes the typical Siegel movie as "a raunchy, dirty-minded film with a definite feeling of middle-aged, middle-class sordidness. Every cop, prostitute, and housewife is compromised by something." Siegel first made his reputation in the '50s with Invasion of the Body Snatchers, now generally acknowledged to be the greatest science-fiction film. When he graduated to more high-class projects in the '60s, his admirers initially feared that his films would become too respectable. They were soon reassured — thrillers like The Killers, Madigan, and The Beguiled are, if anything, even further developments of the direc-tor's slambang editing, uncompromisingly mis-fit heroes, and harsh treatment of social decay.



MADIGAN (1968)
Directed by Don Siegel. Produced by Frank P. Rosenberg. Screenplay by Howard Rodman and Abraham Polonsky, from the novel The Commissioner by Richard Dougherty. Photographed by Russell Metty. Technicolor. 101 minutes. Cast: Richard Widmark (Dan Madigan), Henry Fonda (Anthony X. Russell), Inger Stevens (Julia Madigan), Harry Guardino (Rocco Bonaro), James Whitmore (Inspector Kane), Susan Clark (Tricia Bentley), Michael Dunn (Castiglione), Don Stroud (Hughie).

"Madigan turns out to be the best American movie I have seen so far in 1968. The strength of the film is the seriousness of the genre and the morally greyish tint of its characterizations. Henry Fonda's police commissioner walks around as if he has something else on his mind, and he usually has. Richard Widmark's detec-tive on the spot lives on the edge of his nerves. New York is seen as a city where the future is always colliding with the past, and the moral arithmetic never quite adds up." — Andrew Sarris

"The remarkable thing about Madigan is how many cliches it could have had but managed to avoid" — Peter Bogdanovich. One of the rare police films that indulges in neither right-wing nor left-wing attitudinizing, Madigan is Siegel's most ambitious and important film of the '60s. Paralleling the life of a harried police com-missioner with that of a harried police com-mander, and evocative canvas of film sketches a broad and evocative canvas of the underside of Fun City. Nowhere is Siegel's famous editing prowess more evident: the opening rooftop chase and the final shootout are object lessons in the art of action montage.
$100.00

COOGAN'S BLUFF (1969)
Produced and directed by Don Siegel. Screen-play by Herman Miller, Dean Riesner, and Howard Rodman. Photographed by Bud Thackery. Music by Lalo Schifrin. Technicolor. 100 minutes. Cast: Clint Eastwood (Coogan), Lee J. Cobb (McElroy), Susan Clark (Julie), Tisha Sterling (Linny Raven), Don Stroud (Ringerman).

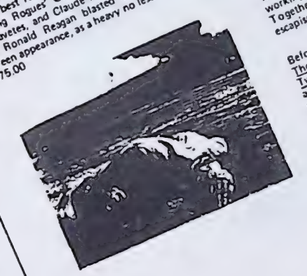
"Coogan's Bluff has all the qualities that distin-guished Siegel's previous efforts: it is tough, and so well made that it seems to have evolved naturally, almost without benefit of cast, crew, or rehearsal. Those who are willing to look beyond this carefully nurtured air of artlessness, however, will see some of the best American moviemaking of the year." — Time

"An extremely entertaining, beautifully made picture, featuring Clint Eastwood's most likable performance to date." — Peter Bogdanovich

An Eastern Western about an Arizona sheriff who comes to New York and loses his extra-dited prisoner in the jungle of cities. Coogan's Bluff uses its structure both for humorous con-trast and for developing a genealogy of anti-social outcasts from the cowboy and Eastwood's enigmatic, dangerous Westerner meets the pimps, crooks, hippies, and cops he meets in the big town. Not surprisingly, this is at once Siegel's funniest and most violent work. A com-panion piece to Madigan in its study of the effects of urbanism on individualism, Coogan's Bluff is more relaxed than its predecessor, em-ploying a wide and inventive variety of charac-ters and locales.
$200.00

THE KILLERS (1964)
Produced and directed by Don Siegel. Screen-play by Gene L. Coon, from a story by Ernest Hemingway. Photographed by Richard L. Rawlings. Color. 94 minutes. Cast: Lee Marvin (Charlie), Angie Dickinson (Sheila Farr), John Cassavetes (Johnny North), Ronald Reagan (Browning), Clu Gulager (Lee), Claude Akins (Earl Sylvester).

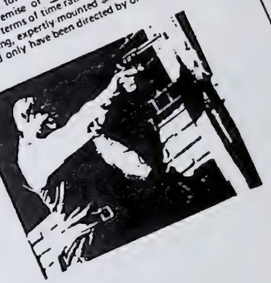
Based loosely (and loosely is the word) on the Hemingway story about two professional assas-sins whose curiosity about a victim's refusal to run leads them to a million dollar bankroll, The Killers is the definitive Siegel thriller — a hard-journey from nowhere to nowhere in a hard-favorites, plastic world. One of Siegel's personal edged, plastic world. One of Siegel's personal "shot in the style I feel is my best, very taut and very lean, with great economy, but I had to do it very fast. I don't think I would change much." Lee Marvin considers the aging killer to be one of his best roles, and he has an excellent sup-porting Rogues' Gallery in Clu Gulager, John Cassavetes, and Claude Akins. You also get to see Ronald Reagan blasted down in his last screen appearance, as a heavy no less.
$75.00



TWO MULES FOR SISTER SARA (1970)
Directed by Don Siegel. Produced by Martin Rackin and Carroll Case. Screenplay by Albert Maltz, from an original story by Budd Boetticher. Photographed by Gabriel Figueroa. Music by Ennio Morricone. Technicolor. 114 minutes. Cast: Shirley MacLaine (Sara), Clint Eastwood (Hogan).

"The pure entertainment film need not be an anachronism in the new Hollywood. And that is exactly why it is such a pleasure to have a movie like Two Mules for Sister Sara. It is a pleasure to watch Eastwood develop into a first-rate actor, and to see Miss MacLaine working at the peak of her truly unique talents. Together they make moviegoing fun, and escapism just a bit meaningful." — Harry Clein, Entertainment World

Before embarking on the intense stylistics of The Beguiled, Siegel took time out to make a highly dubious run and her adventure com-panion decimating a large portion of Old Mexico. Free-wheeling, anarchic, and infused with the sense of fun that went into making it, Two Mules is essentially a two-character drama, and a throwback to the type of adventure film it was almost considered impossible to make any more.
$150.00



DEATH OF A GUNFIGHTER (1969)
Directed by Allen Smithee. Produced by Richard Lyons. Screenplay by Joseph Calvelli. Photographed by Andy Jackson. Technicolor. 94 minutes. Cast: Richard Widmark (Frank Patch), Lena Horne (Claire Quintana), John Saxon (Lou Trinidad), Michael McGreevey (Dan Joslin), Carrol O'Connor (Lester Locke).

"Comes across as one of the strongest films of 1969. It is a tribute to Siegel's talent, both as director and as editor, that despite his partial participation in the project, the film decisively reflects the Siegel personality." — Focus

Death of a Gunfighter was begun by Robert Totten, then finished by Siegel and signed with the pseudonym Allen Smithee. Siegel, a metal-lic poet of intransigent outcasts, undoubtedly found much to engage him in this strong story of an aging sheriff who, because of the intimate knowledge he has acquired over the years, is considered disposable by everyone from the mayor to the town drunk. In effect, the film takes the premise of Coogan's Bluff one step, develops it in terms of time rather than place, and the shocking, expertly mounted ambush at the end could only have been directed by one man.
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THE GODFATHER

A Paramount release (1972) of an Albert S. Ruddy production. Technicolor, 178 mins. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola; Screenplay by Mario Puzo and Coppola; Based on the novel by Puzo; Director of Photography: Gordon Willis; Music by Nino Rota. Cast: Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, James Caan, Richard Castellano, Robert Duvall, Sterling Hayden, John Marley, Richard Conte, Diane Keaton, Al Lettieri, Abe Vigoda, Talia Shire, Gianni Russo, Al Martino, Morgana King.

1

First of all, I suppose you're wondering about Brando. He's great. The finest American actor of our time has finally found a role sufficiently complex and challenging to engage the full range of his talents. With sagging jowls, darkly circled eyes and thinning silver-gray hair, he moves through the role of Don Vito Corleone with the understated cool of an artist who, no matter what they said, always knew that he was number one. His voice is a beautifully sustained gravel monotone; his movements and facial expressions are low-keyed. With these gifts, as well as his customary assurance and skill, he brings to the role a sense of immutable authority. He doesn't have to resort to shouting or fist waving to convince us of his power; it seems to come from his soul, and we never question it. This is the performance that everyone who has spent a lifetime watching re-runs of **On the Waterfront** and **A Streetcar Named Desire** has been waiting for.

The movie? Oh yeah, the movie. It's called **The Godfather** and it's a pisser — a three hour monster of a super-gangster flick that spills blood, sweat, tears, suspense, and forties nostalgia all over the screen. This is a *moovie* kids, the kind they keep telling you isn't made anymore. Four stars and hot buttered popcorn all around.

The screenplay for the film, adapted by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola from Puzo's novel, has the kind of natural appeal that can't be resisted. It dishes up the dirty truth about a fascinating subculture: the Italian-American gangsters who form the Mafia. Furthermore, rather than locating his mobsters outside the mainstream of American society, Puzo craftily writes of them in terms of ethnic family life and big business. We empathize more readily with the characters this way, but Puzo's method has a built-in booby trap that catches us unaware: we wind up viewing crime as just another facet of American life. A clever trick, and a telling one.

What's most surprising about the screen version of **The Godfather** is how moving it is. Coppola has used the family life side of the story, whose purpose in the book seemed mainly ironic, to generate genuine emotional involvement. When Michael, the youngest son, goes off to avenge the attempted murder of his father, he is warmly embraced by Sonny, the oldest son who has taken over control of the family. It's a sudden, unexpected moment — this camaraderie between family members even in the darkest of moments — and we find ourselves left with a lump in our throats. Coppola never over-sentimentalizes these moments; indeed, he shows us the planning and results of Michael's deed in meticulous, blood-splattered detail. The warmth and close-

ness of the family co-exists in a kind of paradoxical harmony with its savagery and ruthlessness. The people involved are unaware of this duality, and we in the audience are left to sort it out to our own satisfaction. It's this kind of involved, multi-layered approach to the material that makes **The Godfather** such a satisfying experience.

The very look of the film is testimony to Coppola's skills: dirty deals are conjured up in dark, richly-shadowed rooms, while the wives and children of the men exist in an outside world of almost unnaturally pure sunlight. This shadow / death, sunlight / innocence dichotomy becomes the film's primary visual metaphor, and it is so effective (technically) and correct (emotionally) that it never becomes tiresome or simple-minded. Coppola and his cameraman, Gordon Willis, use color the way Luchino Visconti (**The Damned, Death in Venice**) does but, unlike Visconti, they never let the sensuous atmosphere smother the film. It's there to sustain and enrich the narrative.

Coppola has filmed this old-fashioned movie in an old-fashioned style, eschewing zoom lens shots and jump cuts, using long shots, rather than a series of close-ups, to begin scenes, and slow fades to end them. The conventions of earlier films are judiciously employed: when the Don is shot and the family discusses the possibility of a gang war, the continuity of the narrative is preserved by a series of newspaper headlines superimposed over a montage of the family's activities. The pacing of the scenes is exemplary, sustaining a mood of intensity and high drama without dissolving into a mere series of climaxes. The plot covers a ten year period, but it never goes slack, and we rarely become lost in the chronological order of things.

This well-paced, meticulous style of filmmaking is not only perfectly suited to the material; it also gives the story a majestic sweep that turns what could have been melodrama into an epic. With its turbulent generation-unto-generation story, and its neo-classical technique, **The Godfather** reminds us of great American films of the past — films such as **The Best Years of Our Lives, From Here to Eternity, Giant,** and **Gone with the Wind.** Like them, **The Godfather** pulls its audience in by telling a specific story in terms of generalized emotions and universal experiences we can all identify with: birth, death, family ties, loyalty, love, honor and sorrow. And, in the course of doing this, the film, like the other films, illuminates a crucial aspect of the American experience: the struggle to get ahead, to achieve, to better oneself.

Of course, there is a vital difference. The people in **The Godfather** are not George Stevens' fiery Texans or William Wyler's earnest war veterans. They are a group of ruthless criminals who accept murder as the price for social and financial advancement. They are the dark side of the Horatio Alger myth which tells people that, in America, if you try hard enough, anything is possible. We may approve of their goal of advancement within the social order, but we are appalled at their methods — which is the way many of us have come to feel about the United States in the past decade. This hellish vision of the American dream is at the heart of **The Godfather** and, in the midst of the Nixon-America of the seventies, it carries disturbing weight.

John Kane

NEXT ISSUE:

Bust! The Cuban Film Festival that Wasn't
An interview with Conrad (Chappaqua) Rooks
Zagreb! (More than you ever wanted to know about Yugoslav animation films)

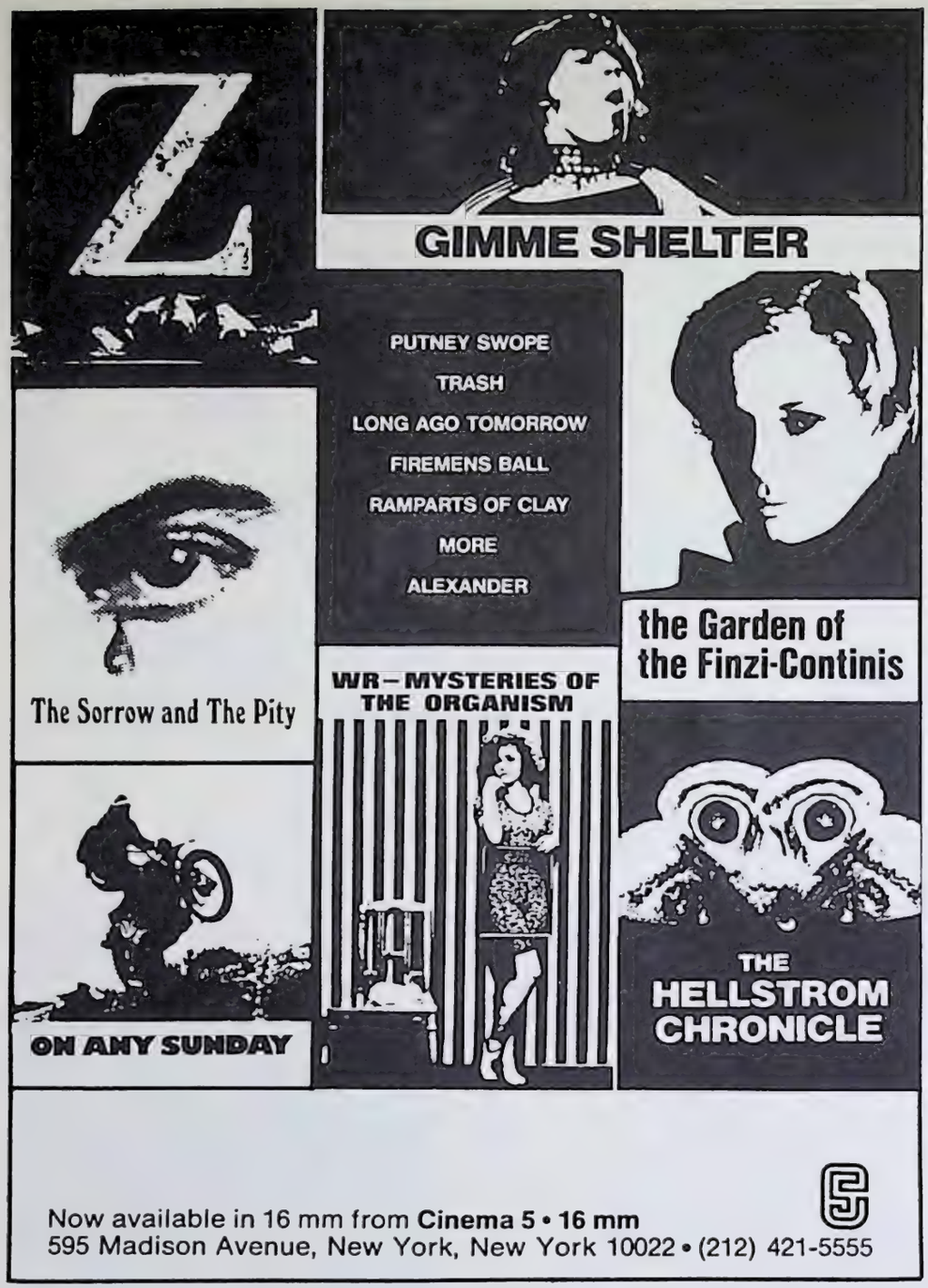
2

Now we have **The Godfather**. America's love affair with bloody murder has spawned a mutant: family style Porno-Violence. Reality is racing to keep up with the cinema. Last month at Umberto's Clam Bar in lower Manhattan some grown men who do this sort of thing for keeps pulled off a one-take scene that must have been pretty tasty. They blasted Crazy Joey Gallo while his beautiful wife and their child looked on in horror. Unfortunately, Francis Ford Coppola couldn't get there with his camera. They say Crazy Joey dumped brains all over Mott Street before he snuffed.

The crowd at **The Godfather** the night I attended was distinguished only by its vast size. Otherwise the usual: mini-skirts, long hair, gold-plated peace pins, vinyl boots. The guy next to me was a gentle-looking, bearded chap wearing wire rims and bell-bottom blue jeans. On the way to the lobby to buy popcorn he stepped on my toe, then smiled and said, "Peace, brother," in such an engaging way I couldn't help but smile back. When the lights went out and the blood bath began, the poor peaceful freak was beside himself. He hugged his hands between his clenched knees, moaning. Each time the wrath of the Corleone family was about to fall on some smart ass punk Gambini or D'Attaglia, the gentle fellow rocked in his seat and murmured, "Now he's gonna get it, now he's gonna get it." I could have closed my eyes, but what the hell. I've been watching the 5:30 News for years.

Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola conspired on the script for **The Godfather**. Paramount must have paid a fat buck for the script, and it's going to be worth it. **The Godfather** touches all the bases on its way home to the cash register. It has big happy family scenes, the sensitive kid driven to violence (Billy the Wop?), the-bad-guys-get-theirs, but most of all it has the vicarious kick con. All along, everybody knows that you can only push the Corleones so far before, well, you know, before the payoff. Before the hit. Before here's-your-lunch-motherfucker. So the tension builds as our favorite Sicilian mobsters endure one cheap insult after another until one day — I wouldn't want to spoil it for you.

Go see **The Godfather**. It stinks in the usual expensive, techno-creepy, Hollywood fashion. In the meantime, consider the following. The



current hip justification for portraying sickeningly explicit violence on screen is that it's supposed to be a slice of life, the real thing, and we must not fear to examine ourselves. This is a public relations lie. Paramount portrays violence because the abomination is a sure-fire way to jack up Mr. & Mrs. Moviegoer for $2.50 each. The logic of "It exists, so why not make a spectacle out of it?" sounds a lot like "We're there, so why not stay and finish the job?" As you may recall, that is the justification often used for the homicide and genocide in S.E. Asia — and it is *also* a lie perpetrated by the corporations to rationalize taking taxpayers for a bundle. Moral: The corporation always lies, and it always lies for the same reason.

The Corporation senses that **The Godfather** is pornographic — despite the lack of sex, or anything else resembling a life force. They throw in redeeming social value for protection at court. In this minor epiphany, the mob shows its true colors at a conciliatory meeting. They decide to get into narcotics. Don Corleone is negative, because he doesn't think Joe Average will dig dope in the same heartfelt way he digs whores, dice, and numbers. A compromise is reached and we learn that none of the vile stuff will be peddled on school yards — it's all ticketed uptown for the niggers. "They're animals anyway." Get it? The mob is as American as apple pie, the old racist with a soft spot for kids. It's something to talk about after the flick. What a bunch of shit! Everybody knows the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S. Govt. is the biggest smack peddler on the face of the earth. As for that racist baloney, all the insiders know that Crazy Joey Gallo integrated the mob. He even had a black psychopath grease Joe Colombo at that big New York Italian American rights rally. Crazy Joey brought the concept of community control to the Harlem numbers racket. So it looks like reality is still one or two steps ahead of the fertile corporate mind of Hollywood.

ADDENDUM-OBIT:

Poor Joey Gallo. Word is the organization men who run the mob couldn't get behind his nutty macho style. Joey is actually said to have studied old gangster films so his identity became James Cagney / Al Capone / Joey Gallo. He wore '30s costumes and talked out of the side of his mouth. His whole family is in on the schuck. Mamma Gallo screamed, "My baby, my baby," and clutched her bosom as they lowered Crazy Joey into the grave. At that very hour, a certain Ginaro, former bodyguard to Joe Colombo, was getting his guts unloaded all over the sidewalk in Brooklyn. So powerful is the grip of the Hollywood delusion that the poor gangsters can't even employ the latest methods. If only the Dons would wise up and consult the hired guns down at Minneapolis Honeywell — they could learn how to incinerate Little Italy just like Bangpop Thailand.

Bruce Rubenstein

MOURIR D'AIMER

Director: André Cayatte; Screenplay: Cayatte and Albert Naud; Adaptation and Dialogue: Pierre Dumayet; Photography: Maurice Fellous; Music: Louiguy. Cast: Annie Girardot, Bruno Pradal, François Simon, Monique Mélinand, Nathalie Nell, Nicolas Dumayet, Bernard Jeantet. A Franco-London Film (Paris) / Cobra Film (Rome) co-production, color, 110 mins. Distributed (English North America) by M.G.M

André Cayatte has made a film about *l'affaire Russier* which is simple, clear, sharp, clean, strong, stunning, together, inexorable and, as a result, mythic. It is an angry, granitic monument to the revolution of May '68 and, because it reminds us of the lost hopes of that all-too-brief month four years ago, it is a painfully difficult but finally cathartic film. Cayatte, of course, did not invent the story of Gabrielle Russier, a school teacher in Marseilles who fell in love and moved in with one of her students — a story he tells, so far as I know, without departing seriously from the bare facts of the case. He has, however, had the genius to realize that *l'affaire Russier*, in its simplicity, is a story of mythic proportions, summarizing the desires and hopes — and finally failures — of the brief springtime revolution.

Daniele (Annie Girardot) falls in love with Gérard (Bruno Pradal) during the events of May. Their romance becomes known to the townspeople and as the revolution cools, the anger of the bourgeoisie (including the Leninist intellectual bourgeoisie) grows. They attempt to separate her from Gérard, who is still a minor (a fact which is stressed throughout the film, with a sense of the irony of justice that would do credit to Gilbert and Sullivan). She is jailed. She is released on the condition that he leave the city. He is sent to an "asylum" in which

James Monaco is a lecturer in Film and Drama at New York's New School for Social Research. He is also the author of three AFI pamphlets: An Introduction to Film Technique, A Glossary of Film Terms, *and* A Bibliography of Film Literature.

the good liberal doctors apply all the drugs at their command in order to "cure" him of his obsession with her. He escapes. He is sent back. He is released. She is sent to prison again. She is released. She says: one should be able just to slip to the other side of despair. She does.

On the skeleton of this plot, Cayatte has built an angry montage of the images and sounds which turn a potentially maudlin love story (it's advertised that way) into a monument to the revolution. He does not show us her trial, he shows us her prison. He does not dwell on the love affair, rather he concentrates on the faces of the young people who help them, and the townspeople who become hysterically fearful of her very existence. The point is made very clearly that she is a political prisoner, because she is the living proof that May was not a carnival, but an honest explosion of human desires. She is May. She is *Liberté sur les barricades*. But the film never degenerates into mere polemics. Cayatte deals in close-ups, and angrily quick-cuts from face to face to face. It is all faces, and simple, clear colors and shapes of a sublimely fresh spring; one can smell the May of Mays. The sound track is just as diffident and just as crisp. Throughout the film, Gérard is heard on the soundtrack discussing, calmly with a narrator, the images they are watching and adding a detail here, a comment there. The film is endistanced, becomes a document, and therefore all the more powerfully effective. There is a similar diffidence about the images, even though they are mainly close-ups, which prevents them from becoming cloying. The narrative echoes slightly in a hollow room; when Gérard walks on gravel there is a metallic click which is wincingly evocative of the mood Cayatte wants to communicate.

We see Daniele and her friends mainly in her apartment, the walls of which are plastered with posters which, because they are (or were) real artifacts and symbols of the revolution, become themselves important characters in the myth of the film. To see them again and to know that they have yellowed in desuetude is to feel the heart of **Mourir d'Aimer**:

VIVRE C'EST AIMER.
LIBEREZ L'EXPRESSION!
LA LUTTE CONTINUE!
NOUS SOMMES TOUS INDESIRABLES.

The pain of the film is the need for the past tense that echoes in the mind every time one of these poems appears defiantly in the background.

Finally, the perspective of Cayatte's film "brings home to us," as Brecht wrote, "all men's guilt." It is made clear that, even in prison, Daniele keeps her hopes alive until she falls in with "le serpent" (a lovely, quiet junky), tries, as she says, "only to replace drugs with life," and then fails. Only then does Daniele fall into the depression which allows her to slip to the other side of despair. Cayatte's objectivity is no excuse for inaction; rather it is assertive and active, a clarion like the shrieking sirens with which the film opens. The film closes with the profile of Daniele's dead face, fading slowly as we hear her voice on the soundtrack quietly asking that her death serve as an example.

La Lutte, continue-t-elle?

"This is not a film about the Russier affair, it is a film about a fictional situation which, through fictional characters, poses all the same problems as the Russier affair. We used the Russier affair in the same way as Stendhal used the Bertet affair in writing *The Red and the Black*, and for the same reasons; public opinion in 1827 was shocked by the affair because, through this crime of passion, the society of that time was itself held up to question. If today the Russier affair

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EL CHACAL

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Irwin Silver, National Guardian

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shocks people, it is because in the same way our own society is being questioned. That is the reason for so much attention being paid to it, for the many articles, television and radio programs, books, songs, even an exhibition of paintings at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris.

"We could have made a film about the affair itself. We had every right to do so — and we could have done so all the more easily, since we had the support and help of all those who loved Gabrielle Russier, such as her father and her ex-husband, Christian. If we had done so, it would have been in accordance with Gabrielle Russier's own wishes, for she said, two days before her death, 'I hope that what is happening to me serves some purpose at least.'

"But we finally decided that showing real people would provoke a reaction which would ultimately detract from our thesis, that it would confuse the issue and restrict its application, for it is Society itself, rather than individuals, that was the cause of this drama." — André Cayatte

James Monaco

OVER LOOKED & UNDER RATED

The science fiction film is an oft-maligned genre, and much of this criticism is justified for there are few good sf films being made. In fact probably no more than ten excellent science fiction films have been made to date. In the last few years there have been two very good sf films that have gone virtually unnoticed by all except science fiction aficionados.

Colossus The Forbin Project: (Dir. Joseph Sargent)
If you've never heard of this film, it isn't too surprising because it has gone through two title changes. Originally called **Colossus 1980**, then released as **The Forbin Project**, and finally changed to **Colossus The Forbin Project**. Released approximately a year late, this 1969 film was highly praised by the *New York Times*. Many sf films are never properly distributed, but I hoped the good review in the *Times* would help bring **Colossus** to Montreal. I waited a long time and finally gave up hope, but after a year and a half Academy Awards time came around again. When Helen Hayes won an Oscar for her role in **Airport**, the Ross Hunter opus was brought back to a small suburban Montreal theatre. With it, hidden in the bottom half of a double bill, was **Colossus**. Three months later it was on television, and reviewing it for *TV Guide* Judith Crist called it a fun little exercise in high camp; watch it but don't take it too seriously was her message. I couldn't have agreed with her less.

Five Million Years to Earth: (Dir. Roy Ward Baker)
The second neglected sf film, which also arrived in Montreal on a suburban double bill, is **Quatermass and the Pit**, retitled **Five Million Years to Earth** for North American audiences. This Hammer film was the last of a trilogy of sf features based on three sf serials Nigel Kneale wrote for the BBC during the fifties. It relates man's superstitions with an ancient Martian "invasion". (Traces of a Martian invasion five million years ago are found at a London excavation site.) Thus when London is saved, mankind has perhaps conquered it's oldest enemy ... the dark side of its own mind.

Joel Uman

The Telephone Book: (Dir. Nelson Lyon).
There's got to be something to a film that has been so universally lambasted for bad taste; and — indeed — this picture is full of vitality and fun. It follows the odyssey of an aging 18-year-old nymphet as she searches for the obscene phone-caller (named John Smith) who turns her on. Interspersed through her story are the dead-pan confessions of practicing and retired dirty phone-callers, and some fine animation by Milton (Push Pin Studios) Glaser. The film is strictly for laughs; don't let the trench-coated porno-freaks who seem to be the film's only fans shush you up.

J. F. Stackhouse

Blushing Charlie: (Dir. Vilgot Sjoman)
Despite the notoriety he earned with **I Am Curious**, Sjoman's latest film to reach North America has been largely ignored. It's a wonderful film and of a kind that is fast becoming a rarity in an age of defeatist death wishes: a pro-life film. (For techno-freaks, it was shot in super-16 and looks great.) *Joe Medjuck*

THE TODD KILLINGS

National General Release: A Barry Shear Production: 1971: Color: Written by Dennis Murphy and Joel Oliansky. Cinematography, Harold E. Stine. Editor, Walter Thompson: Music: Leonard Rosenman: Director, Barry Shear: Cast: Robert F. Lyons, Richard Thomas, James Broderick, Belinda Montgomery, Holly Near, Fay Spain, Barbara Bel Geddes, and Gloria Grahame

In **The Todd Killings**, Barry Shear works with the subject of powerful and corrupted youth — which he began with such panache in **Wild in the Streets.** The lines of conflict are much the same in this sort-of sequel: a charismatic young man with guru pretensions (happily, the film is not keyed in a sensational Mansonite idiom) despises the sealed, bourgeois, adult world. A "sex singer", he lures and tantalizes the not-so-innocent teen-agers in the sunny small town which is the appropriate backdrop. (It seems to be a current preoccupation in movies to present kids in small towns as living in an advanced state of sexual ripeness.) Unlike his counterparts in **Wild in the Streets,** Skipper Todd's resentment is directed against the girls he seduces, rather than the adults he mocks; like Browning's Porphyria's Lover, he kills his women because he wants total control of them.

Shear's canvas is large: like Bogdanovich in **Targets**, Shear wants to suggest the intimate connection between absolute blandness and pathological violence, so he offers as an explanation for his protagonist's derangement the whole deadening complex of mid-American life: the silly, plastic Jack-in-the-Box hamburger joints, the inane cultural aspirations of dessicated matrons, dehumanized old age homes, antiseptic public swimming pools, the shabby, soul-denying blandness of lower income housing and the gaudy sterility of homes of the privileged rich, paparazzi-like voyeurism in regard to personal tragedy, teen-aged hang-out bars (though drugs are freely discussed, the atmosphere of the bars is like a remnant from the juvenile-delinquent 50's). To insure a contemporary flavoring, there are glancing references to Agnew, the War, Angela Davis.

As in **Wild in the Streets,** Shear initially may seem to be defending the energies of youth against the entrenched slovenliness of their elders, but in the final result both films are equally critical of both sides of the yawning Gap. Shear's cynicism — his withholding of sympathy — is such, in fact, that his films themselves begin to participate in the universal corruption. When, at the end of **The Todd Killings,** a lawyer suggests to Skipper that, if he plays his cards right, he can engineer himself into the role of victim and hence hero, the completed circle of corruption threatens to engulf the film itself.

The film's fantasy is much less high-strung than in **Wild in the Streets.** Deliberately avoiding the manic release of the earlier film, and working closer to naturalistic surfaces, Shear achieves a vision of the confinements of small town Americana which is grisly and tangible. In a way, the film is a poor man's **Last Picture Show.** Though Shear's film is more ambitious intellectually, its absence of lyricism, its unromanticized, unmythicized milieu, and its escalation of sexual frustration to the realm of pathology, insulate it from mass acceptance as well as from prestigious distribution. Shear has energy, but he's quick, his effects are too often ungauged, tossed off injudiciously. For all its suggestive atmospherics and thematic weightiness, **The Todd Killings** looks like the kind of film to open in the nabes. *Foster Hirsch*

THE LAST MOVIE

Director: Dennis Hopper; Producer: Paul Lewis; Executive Producer: Michael Gruskoff; Screenplay by Stewart Stern, from a story by Dennis Hopper and Stewart Stern; Director of Photography: Laszlo Kovacs; Music: Kris Kristofferson, John Buck Wilken, Chabuca Granda, Severn Darden. Cast: Dennis Hopper, Julie Adams, Rod Cameron, Severn Darden, Sam Fuller, Stella Garcia, Don Gorden, Kris Kristofferson, John Phillip Law, Tomas Milian, Michelle Phillips, Russ Tamblyn, and the villagers of Chinchero, Peru. A Universal release, in Technicolor, 1971, 108 mins.

Dennis Hopper's **The Last Movie** is a frenzied, brilliant love-hate attack on contemporary movies, including his own, and our assumptions about them.

On the surface, **The Last Movie** is about a stunt man, Hopper, who remains behind in Peru after a film crew for which he has been working leaves. The director of the western, which we see being made, is Sam Fuller, and it is fun indeed to watch Fuller direct a pseudo-Italian, pseudo-Fuller western sequence. Fuller's film-in-a-film is a hodgepodge of violence, blood, skillful artificiality and escapism — the kind of movie that audiences ridicule but lay out their money to see. When Fuller and his crew depart, the village Indians move onto the abandoned set with wooden cameras, pretend lights and booms. Their filmmaking mocks what they have seen, but the violence in which they engage is as real as the violence in the Fuller film is artificial.

Joel Uman is a Montreal-based freelance filmmaker. He is currently editing a 20-minute science fiction film, **Tuesday the World Went Mad,** *and is in the pre-production phase of producing a 35mm colour horror/fantasy feature.*

Foster Hirsch has written on film, theater and books for a number of publications, including Film Quarterly, Cinema, The New York Times, Crawdaddy *and* Fusion.

To this point, audiences are with Hopper. After all, we can understand his mockery of the violent western, and we can engage in the intellectual snobbery of the comment on primitive man and his taking over of the film ritual as a religious substitute. But Hopper can't and won't leave it at that. He goes one step further, and it is that step which alienates audiences and critics — and makes **The Last Movie** a fine film.

The sequences concerning Hopper's life outside his relationship to Fuller's crew and the Indians — the sequences concerning his relationship to the girl and to the people he meets in the city — are hard parodies of contemporary, accepted film styles. It is the failure of audiences to recognize this that has led to so much anti-Hopper feeling. Audiences and critics alike fail to realize this parody exists (although it is pushed in their faces) because it challenges their basic assumptions about movies. We can laugh at Fuller's western, moralize about the Indians, but can we take it when the camera turns against us?

From Hopper's unmotivated weeping at the beginning to an hilarious conversation at the end in a tent, about finding gold, we are challenged to question the intellectual sentimentality of John Huston (**Treasure of Sierra Madre** is not only parodied, it is mentioned), the middle-class realism of John Cassavetes (the relation of Hopper to the two couples in the city is out of **Faces** by way of **Husbands**), and even the self-indulgent lyrical involvement of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper (**The Hired Hand** is mentioned by Hopper, and the rock music score and motorcycles — which have nothing to do with the images we see — are painfully comic touches of self criticism).

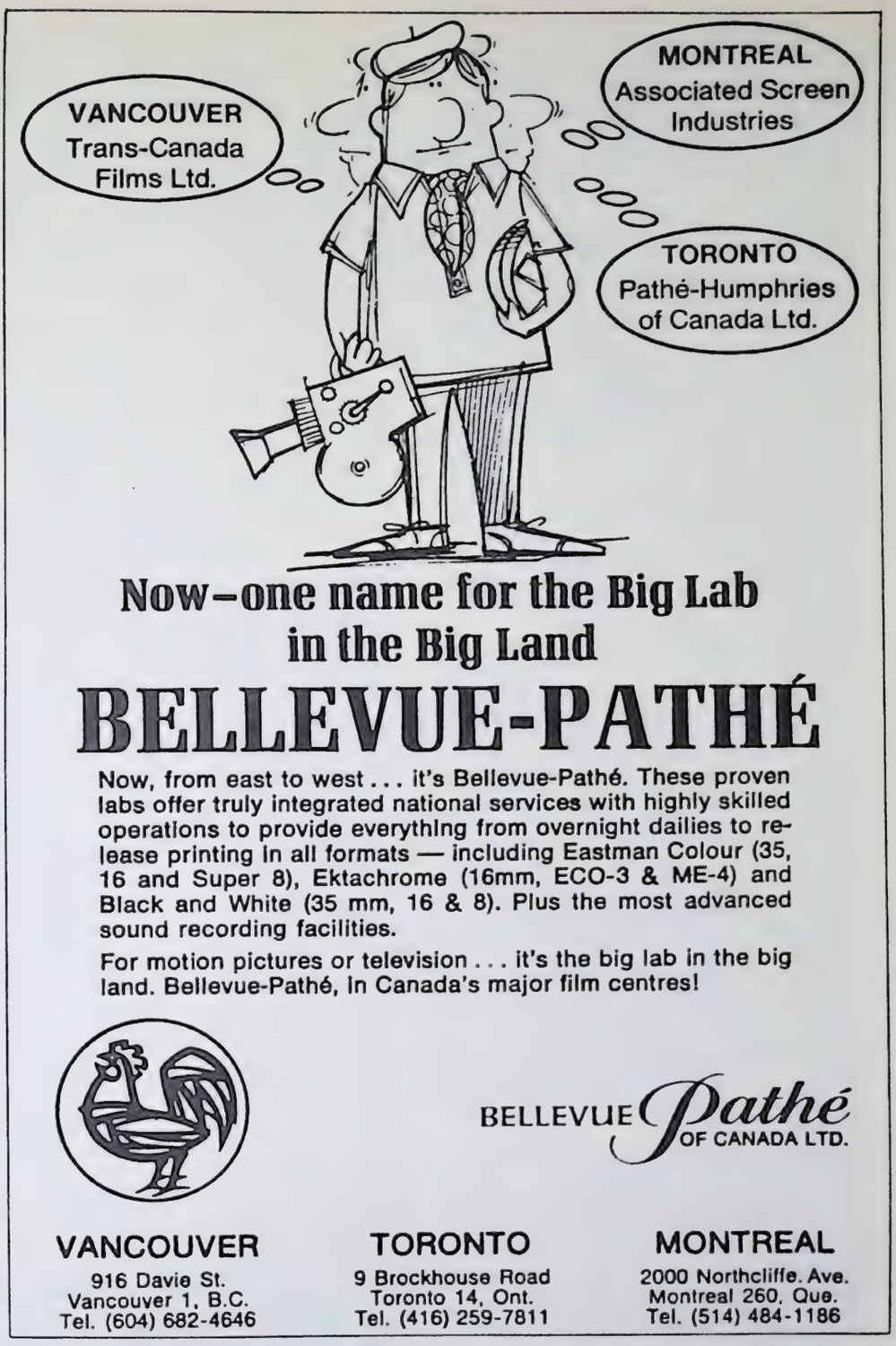
The Last Movie is a mad attempt to break through conventions and film — not just the western film, the intellectual film, or the mass "with it" film — but all commercial film. Hopper does nothing in his film that has not been done by underground filmmakers like the Kuchars or Jack Smith, but he has done it overground, in a commercial 35mm film with theater distribution. The attack is at your neighborhood theater — and rather than acknowledge the attack, the public and its spokesmen prefer to say, "But indeed the man is mad."

Hopper forces the assault, even attacks the film itself. We see black leader, scratches, notices that inserts are missing (clearly they are not), and at one point we hear the camera. For those who think these, and the crudity of the city scenes, are simply attempts to cover up flaws, I point to the supreme technical skill, the near-perfection of the sequences of the Fuller movie and the Indian movie. As the film draws to a close, Hopper brings these two elements, the Fuller film and the Indians, into a confrontation with the parody and anger which he brings from the city sequences. Hopper refuses to simply *become* a prisoner of the Indians and a Christ substitute. We may want some pseudo-Bergman, but he won't give it to us. Instead, he gives us several takes of a shot in which he runs and falls, only to get up and do it again. He inserts shots from the Fuller film, shows the clapboard with his name and that of the film on it, includes takes in which the priest blows his lines and goes out of character, shows a still photographer taking publicity pictures. We can't hide from the fact that we are seeing a movie. Hopper won't let us. He won't let us do anything but question the very idea of a feature film being a worthwhile means of expression. The very title of the film, **The Last Movie**, is destructive, the expression of no place to go.

If Hopper alienates the viewer, then he has succeeded. He has forced us to question what we see. In a sense it is an act of artistic suicide. No wonder audiences react against it, refuse to acknowledge the attack, and prefer to dismiss Hopper by saying "I read about him in *Life*. He was on some drug when he made the film."

It would be nice for us if Hopper decides that there is someplace to go, something to say, and that movies are a worthwhile way to say it. Hopper may have to go underground. Hollywood will willingly feed the hand that bites it — if there is money to be made. That is to be expected. But when Hopper attacks everyone in sight — and makes no money doing it — he is doomed. I assume he knows this, and wouldn't have it any other way.

Stuart M. Kaminsky



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LE BOUCHER

A Films La Boetie (Paris) - Euro International Film (Rome) co-production. Eastman Color. 92 mins. distributed (U.S.A.) by Cinerama. Producer: Andre Genoves. Director: Claude Chabrol. Script: Adaptation and Dialogue: Chabrol. Photography: Jean Rabier. Music: Pierre Jansen. Cast: Stephane Audran, Jean Yanne, Antonio Passalia, Roger Rudel, Mario Beccaria, William Guerault.

In search of entertainment (not significance, not style, certainly not art — just entertainment) we went forth into the world. We saw **The Hot Rock**, **The Last Run**, and **Cabaret**, each and every one a fully-guaranteed Hollywood entertainment package. And we were not amused.

Then we saw **Le Boucher**, Claude Chabrol's complex murder mystery *cum* Hitchcock *hommage*. And despite the fact that it's being promoted as an Art Film, it turns out to be thoroughly gripping entertainment from the first frame to the fadeout. Which just goes to prove Goodwin's First Law: Good art is, by definition, entertaining. (The converse is equally true, by the way: If it isn't entertaining, it isn't good art.) In any case. **Le Boucher** is perfectly brilliant in every respect: at once the most complex and the most touching of Chabrol's films. It's a joy to watch. (See the interview with Chabrol in TAKE ONE, Vol. 3, No. 1)

Although there is much in **Le Boucher** that comes from Hitchcock (such as the element of suspense surrounding the heroine's survival, and the identification between the "good" teacher and the "evil" murderer), Chabrol is very much his own man, and the film isn't really much like a Hitchcock film at all.

For one thing, Hitchcock works basically with montage — for the most part he uses short shots and quick cuts, and the power inherent in his films stems from the way these shots are assembled. Chabrol, on the other hand, works with extremely long takes — a risky business, considering that if even one actor blows it even once, the whole shot must be retaken. But his gamble pays off, because not only don't the actors blow it, but the interplay between them is made intensely believable by the fact that these crucial scenes play in real-time.

The long takes have another function too: they preserve the classical unity of space. One incredible tracking shot takes Helene (the teacher) and Paul (the butcher) from a wedding party, through the streets of the town, to Helene's school. There is no manipulation here, no fakery. Chabrol gives us a clear spacial reference against which to perceive the drama, and as a result the insularity of the characters and their lives comes across with stunning impact.

Chabrol's mastery of cinematic technique is never employed for show. Every camera move has a function — emotional or expositional. At the wedding the camera starts in a close-up of Helene, and pulls back into a long shot of the room — ostensibly to show a guest singing at the far end. But in the middle of the song the camera begins a slow dolly to the right — a movement which is slightly disturbing, even sinister, because such a camera move usually signals, "something is about to happen." But all that happens is the camera coming back in for another close-up of Helene — except this time, because the camera has moved to the right, the close-up becomes a two-shot including Paul as well. The shot suggests that indeed something *is* happening — something strange — but it's just beneath the surface, or lurking outside the frame line.

While **Le Boucher**'s subtly disquieting *mise-en-scène* grows out of Chabrol's technique, it's aided immeasurably by superb performances on the part of Stephane Audran as Helene, and Jean Yanne as Paul. The nuances of their relationship give the film a psychological complexity that utterly transcends the "thriller" genre from which it takes its structure.

Here, again, we can see Chabrol and Hitchcock parting company. Although Hitchcock has delved, at times, into these dark byways of criminal psychology (**Shadow of a Doubt** comes to mind immediately, as does **Suspicion**), he always ties up the loose ends — he explains everything. Chabrol, on the other hand, only suggests — and leaves it to us to solve the puzzle. As the film progresses, we begin to suspect that, somehow, Helene is the catalyst for the murders — and that her repressed sexuality (she has been celibate for ten years, since an unhappy affair) is connected with them too. Chabrol only hints at this, giving no real evidence.

For instance, the murderer first sees Helene at the wedding party, and that very night, as the nuptials are being celebrated, the first murder takes place. At another point, Paul brings Helene a leg of lamb, wrapped like a bouquet of flowers — a sacrifice of flesh to the austere goddess? Finally, when Helene discovers the murderer's identity, they share a long, sexual kiss. Does this signify Helene's compassionate acceptance of the murderer's humanity, or her acceptance of complicity in the murders themselves? The killer is smeared with blood: Is it significant that Helene's single concession to sexuality takes place in the context of blood and death? If we care to extrapolate from this material Chabrol certainly won't stop us — but he's not giving anything away. Different viewers will probably see very different films in **Le Boucher**.

Finally, though, the most wonderful thing about **Le Boucher** is its consistently high level of entertainment. Unlike so many films whose curves of interest rise to scenes of violence or action, only to fall off immediately thereafter, **Le Boucher**'s doesn't fall off at all. Not that it's packed with violence — in fact, it's worth noting that in this film about sex and violence there's no sex, and all the violence takes place off-camera. But Chabrol has many more options open to him, and there's always something interesting to watch, or listen to, or think about.

Le Boucher is probably Chabrol's best film to date. On its evidence alone, we must conclude that he has come of age as an important film artist. This film is worth your time and attention.

Michael Goodwin & Naomi Wise

WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM

A Neoplanta Film production. Eastman Color. 80 mins., distributed (U.S.A.) by Cinema 5. Written and Directed by Dusan Makavejev; Photography: Pega Popovic and Aleksandar Petkovic. Cast: Milena Dravic, Jagoda Kaloper, Ivica Vidovic, Zoran Radmilovic, Miodrag Andric, Tuli Kupferberg, Jackie Curtis.

Predictably, Dusan Makavejev's **WR: Mysteries of the Organism** has been widely advertised in newspapers as a sex-film, thus insuring its denunciation by many reviewers as a porn-flick, thus insuring that it will hardly get seen. If you can arrange to view it, by all means do.

Nearly everyone I know reads the title as "Mysteries of the Orgasm" — a legitimate mistake, since the film revolves around the psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich and his controversial theories of the orgasm. But the misreading of the title, and the misreading of the film by viewers who see only the sexual-erotic aspects, are revealing. Focusing on the sexual content, the essential political nature of the film can be virtually ignored. The organism being discussed in the film's title is not only the human body, but the social corpus as well.

Please don't misunderstand me. Sex is, and must be, at the center of the movie — but that is not what the film is *about*. Sex is a metaphor in Makavejev's understanding of Reich, full of political implications.

Bad sex — i.e., unfulfilled, non-orgasmic sex, and unfulfilled living in general — leads to bad politics: invariably totalitarian, mass-movement politics. Good sex — fulfilling, loving, orgasmic sex and living — can lead (but apparently haven't yet led) to good politics: a kind of democratic socialism which permits a maximum degree of personal freedom.

That's the theory. You may hold that it's utter nonsense, and still find that the film works as a unified work of collage art. Even if the viewer believes that Makavejev and Reich are naive sex-fetishists, the film can still be spellbinding on the many levels on which it operates.

•It works on the level of biography, using documentary footage of Reich himself, especially of his arrest in 1956 and subsequent jailing. Reich, who fled the Nazis because they burned his books, who fled the Communists because they found his theories threatening, was handled by the freedom-loving Americans in much the same way: they threw him into Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, where he died, and in 1960 the Food and Drug Administration literally burned his books and papers. (He was imprisoned for contempt after he refused to answere questions about his theories before the FDA, and then the court. "Science has to judge me, and not an agency for food and cosmetics that is connected with the interests of the cosmetics industry," he said of the FDA — which was hounding him because of "illegal sale of orgone accumulators.")

•It works on the level of documentary. Interspersed within the vague story line, which takes place in Makavejev's native Yugoslavia, are segments of Reichian disciples talking about, and demonstrating, his techniques; of a transvestite blabbing intimately of his/her anal defloweration; of an erotic artist describing her craft; of a plaster-caster molding a young man's organ, and so one. A cinematic rhythm is built up — as well as providing the voyeur with his money's worth.

•It works on the level of political history, with footage of Lenin and Stalin and Mao and Hitler, some of which overlaps scenes with a Russian skating star (named Vladimir Ilych!) whose way of looking at life is entirely dependent upon an intellectual grasp of party line ideology —

Bernard Weiner, film critic for the San Francisco Fault, *is a regular contributor to* Film Quarterly, Sight and Sound, *and* The Nation.

in other words, through his head not his sexual body. (In a great women's liberation scene, he is beaten by his frustrated Yugoslav girlfriend after he rejects her when she reaches for his you-know-what during one of his boring soliloquies; they finally make grand love, but it's not fulfilling enough for him, and he can't understand it anyway, so he slices off her head with his iceskate blade.)

*And it works on the level of traditional narrative, as an exponent of free-love in Yugoslavia rallies her housing project comrades to an acceptance of the joys of orgasm as a way of escaping the sexual revisionism of the socialist movement.

In my opinion, Reich (at least toward the end of his life) was on the verge of nuttiness — but who cares? He was onto something important: the attempt to help men and women integrate themselves with their great pranic energy flows (what he called orgone energy) through a combination of various physical, mental and spiritual techniques, many of which, in slightly different form, are accepted modes of therapy today. He was, it is clear, a man far ahead of his time — and, as with most prophets, in deep trouble all his harried life.

Makavejev, perhaps because he is a Yugoslav and thus somewhat divorced from the heavy-handedness of the Soviet reality, and the starched Puritanism of America, is searching for a new form of social order — and a new form of filmmaking: one, as he has explained, that is "a kind of well-organized anarchy." That is, as he describes his own film, a healthy "interplay between organization and spontaneity."

His film is just a little too sloppy and open-ended for my taste, and some of the sexual footage is overdone or simply unnecessary, but it is a remarkable attempt at a collage-type cinema. In Makavejev, we are witnessing a future aspect of filmmaking and, though it works somewhat crudely in this case, we can be sure that someone even more talented will come along to use the technique even better. In the meantime, there is Makavejev's **WR: Mysteries of the Organism** to show us how, on a rich but somewhat rudimentary level, it can be done.

Bernard Weiner

WHAT'S UP DOC?

A Warner Bros. release of a Saticoy (Peter Bogdanovich) production, in Technicolor, 1972, 94 mins. Directed and Produced by Peter Bogdanovich; Screenplay: Buck Henry, David Newman, Robert Benton, from a story by Bogdanovich; Director of Photography: Laszlo Kovacs; Editor: Verna Fields; Production Design: Polly Platt. Cast: Barbra Streisand, Ryan O'Neal, Madeline Kahn, Kenneth Mars, Austin Pendleton, Sorrell Booke.

With **What's Up Doc?**, his fourth feature, Peter Bogdanovich continues to prove that he is the most skilled and interesting (and commercially viable) of the new directors in the Hollywood system. On the other hand, for a young director of Bogdanovich's talent to so embrace a dying and corrupt Hollywood system is inherently disturbing.

Clearly Bogdanovich wishes to call our attention to the glories and beauties of the Hollywood filmmaking tradition. He sees the tradition (of Ford, Hawks, Dwan and Walsh) as noble; and he is asserting himself as heir to that tradition. But old traditions die, and new ones take their place. This is the natural order of things. Ultimately it seems wrong-headed to cling to the past, however beautiful, when one should be concerned with the present and the future. It is for old men to watch the passing of traditions that were their own; and the late masterpieces of John Ford and Howard Hawks are appropriately and deeply concerned with this process of death (and rebirth). At age 32, Peter Bogdanovich is the oldest director working in Hollywood, figuratively speaking.

What's Up Doc? is perhaps the most academic movie ever made. Bogdanovich has always abhorred academics, so this is the nastiest thing I can think to say. It is academic in the sense that it is an exercise knowingly imitating an established and revered form. It

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is the kind of work that a young art student is required to produce when he is sent to the Louvre with his sketch pad to copy an old master. The object of the exercise is to imitate the master as precisely as possible, so that in the process of making the copy the young artist learns the methods of the master through a direct experience. It is an active, rather than a contemplative, form of learning.

If it is Bogdanovich's goal simply to learn the secrets of the old masters (i.e., if he still considers himself a student), then he is not to be faulted — for he is a very promising student. But one is impatient for Bogdanovich to break out on his own. If **What's Up Doc?** seems ultimately tedious, it is only because we are anxious for a new master to emerge.

If one shares with Bogdanovich a knowledge and love of Hollywood's past, it is impossible to watch **What's Up Doc?** with an innocent eye. Instead of being a new and joyous experience, the film becomes a compilation of characters, situations, and jokes from the comedies of Howard Hawks. The film is an *hommage* skillfully made by an historian. But, since Hawks is still alive and capable, one might have preferred to have the master himself direct the film instead of the student.

I am not suggesting that Bogdanovich is being dishonest with us. He will be the first to proclaim both his love for Hawks' comedy, and his direct influence. And if the audience with which I saw the film is any indication, Bogdanovich's gesture is going to be gratefully received by an audience starved for straightforward, non-neurotic humor, and films intended simply to entertain. Bogdanovich seeks an artless art, a style that does not self-consciously call attention to itself, an experience at which an audience can laugh, and forget for a moment its daily problems. These are thoroughly honest and commendable intentions.

On the other hand, a starving audience tends to over-react (embarrassingly) when finally fed. A mediocre film like **Love Story** had only to suggest a tradition of romance to release an avalanche of tears that had been too long stored up. In such a case, instead of giving an audience a gift, the filmmaker is simply manipulating the audience's needs. The resultant hysteria is more an indication of the depth of the sickness than the resurgence of health.

What's Up Doc? retells the familiar Hawks story of the intellectual professor, fully involved with minute questions of history, who comes under the chaotic influence of a woman very much of the present. She teaches him that to live in the danger and excitement of an unpredictable present is vastly preferable to the quiet safety of the past. This storyline is the pretext of Hawks' **Ball of Fire** (1941), **A Song Is Born** (1948), and, most specifically, **Bringing Up Baby** (1938).

In **What's Up Doc?**, Ryan O'Neal plays the Cary Grant role, and Barbra Streisand the Katharine Hepburn role. It is an ideal role for Streisand, and she is true both to herself and to the character. Ryan O'Neal's affable personality seems insufficiently strong for comedy, though, and he is often left imitating Cary Grant. Bogdanovich probably should have played the part himself, and he does seem to cultivate certain resemblances to himself in O'Neal. But Bogdanovich should also have put himself into his story in another sense. Just as, before meeting Streisand, the only life O'Neal knows is that of old rocks, so the only life director Bogdanovich knows is that of old movies. For Bogdanovich is also Hawks' stodgy young historian, immersing himself in the safety of the entertainment values of the past when he could be trying himself against the infinitely more dangerous challenges of the present. If Bogdanovich is, in real life, to play **Bringing Up Baby**'s David Huxley, where is his Susan?

Bogdanovich's career has just begun, and it is an auspicious beginning. It is as yet difficult to isolate what is to become the vision of Peter Bogdanovich from what is *hommage* to Hawks, Ford, Dwan and the rest. There are certainly moments in **What's Up Doc?** that are fresh and funny and distinctly Bogdanovich. One such sequence is a full shot of a hotel lobby where a ridiculous dowager throws herself on the floor in a fit of anxiety over the theft of her jewels, while onlookers react passively. There are also wonderful bits of pure throw-away humor. But most of the comedy is either taken directly from the highlights of past American comedies, or else plays a variation on gags from that tradition. Because these are familiar gags (at least to the film buff), their execution seems mechanical instead of spontaneous.

The situation is perhaps paralleled by John Ford in one of his first films, **Straight Shooting** (1917). Much of **Straight Shooting** refers directly to the narrative solutions explored earlier by Ford's master, D. W. Griffith. Whole sequences could have been lifted from a Griffith movie. But other scenes are pure Ford in style; and we can see (in their nascent form) Ford's own distinctive sense of composition and play. It is no crime to learn from the great directors of the past, but the world moves much faster in 1972 than in 1917; and one hopes to see a full-blown "film by Peter Bogdanovich" in the near future.

John H. Dorr

TOUT VA BIEN

Jean-Luc Godard's latest film **Tout Va Bien (All is Well)** is perhaps his most ambitious attempt to create a political film which speaks to the present. In it he addresses himself to the particular political situation of France 1972, taking the revolutionary Days of May of 1968 as the point of reference. Assisting him in this venture are his collaborator Jean-Pierre Gorin and his two stars, Yves Montand and Jane Fonda, who accepted to work on the film without pay and without scenario in their commitment to the Leftist cause (with deferments, total budget came to $600,000).

The film was intended to be a "political film" as opposed to a "film about politics" in the words of Gorin, speaking in a recent interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Thus it aimed to show the very process of political thought articulating itself, a production arising directly from the immediate realities of society, the individual, and the film industry as perceived by its directors. Accordingly, the movie starts out with a dialogue between Gorin and Godard.

> Gorin: I want to make a film.
>
> Godard: In order to make one you need money.

On the screen we see Godard putting his signature to checks covering the various expenses incurred in the shooting. They need an actor and an actress: Yves Montand and Jane Fonda appear in profile. It is a love story: they are walking together in a field. But they also have problems: we see her slamming the door in his face. They must be situated in space: we see the land, then the town and the country of that land. And that land is populated by workers, peasants, and the middle class, both upper and lower. Accordingly we see a group of each of them, posed around a machine, a cow, a store, a newly-married couple. They start to go about their business, for "there should be workers who 'worker' and the bourgeoisie who 'bourgeoisie'." Yves Montand is viewing a commercial he has just completed; Jane Fonda gives her radio broadcast. Before our very eyes the idea of the film has been proposed, its characters picked and located in a setting which is specific and mythical at the same time.

The movie portrays the France of 1972, a country apparently far removed from the crisis which came close to toppling the De Gaulle government in May of 1968. All goes well only on the surface. The stars, a French filmmaker and his American reporter wife, go to cover the story of a meat-processing plant shut down by a strike. They try to talk to the boss who is being kept hostage by the workers. They deliver him to the couple in his office and shut the door on them. He explains at length who he is and what he thinks of the strikers. The camera is fixed directly in front of him, showing him seated alone at his desk as he talks about his position. Then the camera shows the spokesman for the C.G.T., the traditional Communist union, in a similar dramatic confrontation. He is no longer shown by himself: two workers stand behind him as he reads the text of the Party statement, full of facts and figures. The camera then shows a heavy-set aging worker sitting at a table with a tall young man leaning against the wall in the background. The rigid confrontation with the previous speakers is thus replaced by a more casual and human positioning. The old worker blames the C.G.T. for its doctrinaire position and its inability to provide leadership for the workers. He talks, instead, about the real injustices of the factory, the poor working conditions, long working hours, low wages. We hear others present their grievances, for the people have many voices, while the Party and management have only one each. We see a close-up of a young working girl standing among her colleagues. She speaks of the abuses the women suffer at the hands of the bosses and the stench and filth that are so characteristic of their plant. While she is talking the camera shows the women at work.

The couple's involvement in the strike triggers their own personal crisis. Social upheaval is contagious: no one can remain a bystander; those who are caught up in it are effected in the most profound personal sense. Yves Montand is confronted by the camera head-on and so is Jane Fonda, as were the workers of the plant and the director. They speak of their frustrations since 1968, the personal oppression they felt following the exuberance of those days. 1968 crystallized their Leftist sympathies in such a way that they could never again content themselves with only partial participation in the movement. Yet during the restoration of the status quo they were forced to abandon their political work and go back to their day-to-day work. Each one tried to keep the struggle alive: he had been planning a political movie for three years while she tried to represent the workers in her radio broadcasts. But despite their efforts they still lost the sense of purpose they shared during the Days of May. Participation in the strike re-ignited the spark, recalled their revolutionary vision, and threw them into turmoil by making them question their very mode of existence. The couple has a confrontation in an attempt to understand what it is that separates them. They cannot

find an answer; they only know that sex and a common apartment are not enough. Unfortunately the movie ends in an unsatisfactory fashion by an unexplained and almost mechanistic reunion. Godard, of course, knew what he wanted to achieve but failed to realize it on the screen. He has explained the position of the couple in terms of society in the following way: "From the moment that you are two, you are stronger, you represent a coupling of forces, a 'unity of opposites' [Mao], but bourgeois society does everything to break this unity, to prevent us from being two, to live as two, or work as two."

"For us," Gorin has said, "reality is not so much going to find images of the real as it is of constructing from the real images which render an account of it." What it means in terms of the movie is best exemplified by Yves Montand's confession in front of the camera. At first this monologue reminds us of Jack Nicholson's diatribe on women in **Carnal Knowledge**, perhaps because of the similarly fixed cameras directly in front of the actor. Yet the impact of Yves Montand's address is much stronger, mainly because the actor and the character are nearly identical. Although he is playing the film director, it is Yves Montand the committed actor who emerges from the screen, Montand the former Communist Party member, the Leftist fighter of **La Guerre est Finie**, **Z**, **The Confession**. He is no longer acting a role — he is talking about his own experiences. It was the make-believe that Godard sought to eliminate from his movie. "Let us have Montand play something which has a real correspondence with what he is in real life, with the clothes he wears usually, and not the role of a worker where we can only see his skill at playing a character that is not him. And so we made of him an intellectual who is removed from the Communist Party and who has problems, as do many people." In the same spirit he assigned the roles of the workers to "the exploited, oppressed actors who feel the class struggle at the level of a piece of steak." It is this will to create a film from the raw materials of contemporary reality which is at the crux of Godard's and Gorin's "materialist fiction,"

But Godard is not interested simply in recreating reality. He gives flight to his fantasy again and again in delightful sequences which burst onto the screen without any warning. Right after a female worker talks to her husband on the phone, asking him to take care of the kids while she is participating in the strike, the phone rings again. This time it is the boss who is calling from next door, asking permission to go to the bathroom. He rushes out of his office to the nearest john, but he finds it occupied. He runs around to all the others but they are all closed. He asks the workers to do something, but they simply laugh at him. He knocks again, the door opens, and one of the workers emerges with a stop watch in his hand, informing him that the usual 3-minute bathroom allotment is up, and he must return to his office. Enraged and unable to hold it any longer, he rushes back to his office, breaks a windowpane, and does his business from his window to the amusement of the workers who watch from next door.

Throughout the film Godard uses cinematic techniques in a highly self-conscious, deliberate way. He relies on the fixed shot a great deal, especially when he elicits statements of purpose from the boss, the workers, and the couple. "I have returned to the fixed shot which permits us to see better what is in the image."

The word is out
Rowdyman
is in.
"The Rowdyman" is no hip-pocket production. Written by Gordon Pinsent, who stars in this film as a charming love-'em-and-leave-'em rascal. He is Alfie with no record of betrayals and knows that keeping footloose and irresponsible requires a severe act of will.
Pinsent's own performance is excellent and charismatic, and Will Geer gives a supporting performance that is hard to forget. In fact the whole ensemble, especially Frank Converse and Linda Goranson, is fresh, attractive and notably gifted. The director, Peter Carter, is a man to remember.
Vivid, off trail, frequently very funny indeed, well-made and better-than-well-acted, sexy, adult and intelligent (yet handled with refreshing restraint).
Charles Champlin
Los Angeles Times
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He also uses his favorite technique of travelling in a new way in the film. "Only now can we speak of a social usage of travelling in **Tout Va Bien**." The social intent is apparent in a final, brilliant, supermarket sequence where the moving camera first records participation in consumer society, then the total disruption of its processes. It is effective in a different way when the camera travels back and forth to objectively show what is happening in the meat-packing plant's half-a-dozen different rooms (with one side left open for the camera to capture the ongoing action). "In the film there are the confiners and the confined. In order to connect them, to compare them, we use travelling ..." This attempt to present an objective view is closely linked to Brecht's efforts of distantiation on the stage. It is no coincidence that Yves Montand, the frustrated filmmaker, speaks of Brecht's theater as the crucial influence in the formation of his own ideas on the role of the cinema. Godard's attempts to objectify are carried to an extreme in his use of shots unusually long in duration. Their presentation of an image to the point of tedium breaks up whatever natural flow certain sequences have started to build up.

Godard and Gorin have based their film on firm ideological foundations. As a result they have successfully driven home the realities of present-day France. The assertion that their film is "political" instead of being "about politics" is a mincing of words: the film is both and its power lies precisely in that. The choice of subject matter is as important a consideration in the evaluation of a work as is the skill with which it is treated. **Tout Va Bien** owes much of its strength to its assault on the current political myths of France. It seeks to reveal the political struggle that has continued in

France since the revolutionary days of 1968 and which has been largely played down by Pompidou's government. The inherent contradictions of capitalist society are successfully translated to the screen in images such as the strikers disrupting that Temple of Consumerism — the supermarket — or the committed filmmaker directing a vulgar commercial. The film is intended to engage the audience and trigger in them the kind of re-evaluation that the main characters undergo through their participation in the strike.

It is precisely this revolutionary intent that bourgeois criticism tried to play down in its comments about the movie. *Le Monde*'s film critic Jean de Baroncelli summed up their position when he wrote "**Tout Va Bien** imposes itself as the youngest, liveliest, most present of films ... It is [Godard's] style, his 'manner,' which triumphs in this film. Each shot, each 'framing,' bears his mark, the mark of his mastery, of his poetic intuitions, of the sureness with which he makes use of cinematographic writing to whose renewal he has contributed so much. We have always preferred Godard the cineast to Godard the thinker." It is not surprising that the bourgeois critic praises Godard's cinematic technique, rather than his subject matter. Forced to admit the power of his films (if not because of personal conviction, at least because of their general popularity) he seeks to explain away Godard's importance by relegating him to the position of a stylistic innovator instead of admitting him as one of the leaders of contemporary cinema both in terms of form and content. This separation of means and end is a well-known phenomenon. To talk about the "poetic intuition" of a shot without considering what is contained within that shot is surely a highpoint of voluntary self-deception.

On the other hand, Godard's films are not powerful simply because they have ideological foundations. Their quality is determined by the extent to which they have an impact on the viewer through cinematic means. In fact. **Tout Va Bien** has many shortcomings. It fails to develop adequately the relationship of the couple. The way in which their personal crises issue from their participation in the strike has been articulated by Godard in interviews, but in the film it remains pretty much a matter of conjecture. Aside from considerations of the story line Godard's gravest fault is his inability to make his films into a continuous entity. His movies lurch along: we find interspersed between extremely long and boring passages a few highly original and exciting visual sequences. Ultimately Godard lacks a sense of cinematic rhythm which often makes it so difficult to sit through his movies. There are certain things about which he cannot be criticized: the social content of his films, his powerful use of images, the sense of imagination and humor with which he creates certain vignettes within the film, and his willingness to adapt the use of the camera to the demands of a particular shot. Because he is the leading Marxist filmmaker does not mean that everything Godard does is wrong, but neither does it mean that he is right in everything. There is no reason why Godard should have a monopoly on Marxist ideology among the leading filmmakers of the Western world. New techniques and styles must now be tried by new people in the creation of a socially conscious cinema.

Steven Kovacs

Steven Kovacs is a doctoral candidate in Fine Arts and Cinema at Harvard University. He is presently living and researching in Paris.

THE ROWDYMAN

A Crawley Films release (1972) of a Canart Films Production; Producer: Lawrence Z. Dane; Executive Producer: F. R. Crawley; Director: Peter Carter; Screenplay: Gordon Pinsent; Director of Photography: Edmund Long; Music: Ben McPeek; Editor: M. C. Manne; Production Manager: Thomas Glynn. Cast: Gordon Pinsent, Frank Converse, Will Geer, Linda Goranson, E. P. "Ted" Henley, Estelle Wall, Sabina Maydelle.

There's never going to be a Canadian film. In this sprawling, varied country there are going to be ten kinds of 'Canadian' film, one for each province. Newfoundland is in the act with **The Rowdyman**, and from the opening moment when Will Cole (Gordon Pinsent) starts running from fat, frantic Constable Francis Williams (E. P. 'Ted' Henley) it is a masterful, sensitive film.

If you aren't "going down the road" then you stay in Newfoundland, and if you are Will Cole you seduce it if it moves and drink it if it pours. (Cole seduces somebody's wife on the train to St. John's. When he says he can only see her in the mornings, she replies she'd take "ten minutes a day in a store window" with him.) The script (also Pinsent's) is magnificently comic in word and deed, ranging from a fight in a bakery to Cole wrapping a young cop around his little finger with confidence and wit. Pinsent has a marvellous, comic face and is playing a part he feels, written as he wanted it.

Beneath the comic surface, though, runs the line of a man losing himself, faced with others who take life seriously while he remains a rowdyman. Stan (Will Geer) dies as Will pushes his wheelchair, and a rowdyman of a previous generation is gone. Will's friend Andrew marries, and moments after a wildly comic wedding night is killed in a piece of Will's horseplay. Will loses Ruth, the only girl he cares for, and comes close to suicide. The film balances the comic and the serious exquisitely in a blend which is becoming a Canadian style. It does it better than, say, **Rip-Off**, because the star role effectively contains both styles, and the serious moments can burst open to comedy without jarring contrast.

One could carp at several things in the film. Slushy romantic music and obvious 'these are my thoughts' songs cover some of the serious sections. It is probably an improvement over emotional dialogue which Pinsent's Will would not speak, but silence would have been better. There is also an uneasy blend of smooth Hollywood-style camera-work and bouncy, grainy, hand-held shots, but good editing helps to paper over this problem. And in the few crowd scenes there is a tendency for the extras to stare at the camera in a fashion which makes one conscious of the film crew behind it.

Balanced against these technical flaws is a letter-perfect set of performances. Pinsent has a star's gifts and the film is built around him so he must be mentioned first, but it is almost unfair to do so. Linda Goranson as Ruth plays opposite Pinsent — a tough place to be in this film — and in the most awkwardly-written role. She seems to change from one scene to the next, but manages to shape the part well given the circumstances. Frank Converse as Andrew Scott, Will's best friend, effectively captures that essence of male friendship which needs no words but functions on grunts, jokes, and punches. After these leads, everyone else should be cited, for the script abounds in comic miniatures and they are all played to the hilt. My three favourite character-moments are Sabina Maydelle's Carol Scott on her wedding night (with price-tag on peignoir), Stuart Gillard as Constable Bill giving out cigarettes, and, undeniably, E. P. Henley's Constable Williams, in his whole role.

You can't sum up **The Rowdyman**. It is too rich and varied in feelings and talent. It captures Newfoundland — as Jutra shows Quebec or Bogdanovich recreates Texas — with a richness of human detail. But the strength among strengths is Pinsent's full, complex, comic and exciting Will Cole, the rowdyman. In the comedy that seems to come easily to Canadian films, one would think that we saw ourselves as a nation of jesters. **The Rowdyman** reminds us that behind the comedy is the ebullience of a young country capable, like Pinsent's Will Cole, of some very serious worrying and aware that comedy reveals reality as effectively as tragedy, but differently.

Peter Brigg

Peter Brigg is presently teaching modern drama at the University of Guelph and runs the Guelph Free Film Theatre.

IN THE WORKS

Herewith, as complete and up-to-date as we can make it, a necessarily brief summary of recent Canadian independent feature-film activity. Productions that have (to the best of our knowledge) received assistance from the Canadian Film Development Corporation are indicated by an asterisk. (Assembled with the assistance of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.)

On the Montreal filmmaking scene, shooting on Claude Jutra's **Kamouraska*** (starring Genevieve Bujold) proceeds apace. A "story of violent love set in Quebec's pioneering days", the film is budgeted at more than $800,000. Director of Photography is Michel Brault and the whole project comes under the wing of Les Productions Carle-Lamy (whose Gilles Carle, freshly back from Cannes where his **La vraie nature de Bernadette*** was the hit of the first week, is already in the midst of shooting his next feature — in super-16 this time, rather than 35mm). Brault, meanwhile, having had his own film project (based on the October Crisis, and now called **Les Ordres**) refused financial assistance from the Canadian Film Development Corporation, is now planning to finance the feature through public subscription — though nothing definite has yet been announced.

Jean-Claude Lord (director of **Delivrez-nous du mal**) has just completed his latest feature, **Les colombes***, a co-production of Les Films Mutuels and Famous Players. The

former organization (an affiliate of Radio-Mutuel, owner of five Quebec radio stations) has also announced that they are going to co-produce the next Nadine Trintignant film and also Marc Simenon's next feature (to be shot in August in Canada and France), starring James Coburn and Mylène Demongeot.

Denis Heroux, whose **Un enfant comme les autres** broke all Canadian records in its first four weeks in Montreal, has now completed shooting **Quelques arpents de neige**. This film, with a reported budget of some $500,000, is now scheduled for September release. It is a love story set in the Quebec of 1837, amidst the Papineau Rebellion, and stars Daniel Pilon, Mylène Demongeot, and Frederique de Pasquale (one of the leads in **The French Connection**). Heroux starts shooting of **J'ai mon voyage!** in July, and has already made plans to begin work on **The Captors** (based on the novel by John Farris) this fall (the latter film to star — tentatively — Cat Stevens).

Elsewhere, Harvey Hart is now supposedly set to direct Maxine Samuels' production of **The Pyx**, based on the first novel (published in 1959) of Loyola's professor John Buell (previously optioned by James Mason — without tangible result — in 1963). The film is scheduled for shooting in and around Montreal this summer.

Jean-Claude Fournier is supposed to start shooting in August of a feature (apparently budgeted at $1 1/4 million) which Cinema Center will distribute world-wide — Chief Dan George and Donald Sutherland to star in that one.

Larry Kent is to start shooting on September 15 for his next feature, **Keep it in the Family*** (formerly **The Gap**). Cinepix to distribute.

Alan Pakula (**Klute**) has the movie rights, now, to Mordecai Richler's *St. Urbain's Horsemen*.

And the on-again off-again production of **Lies My Father Told Me***, originally supposed to star Zero Mostel under the direction of Jan Kadar, now seems as if it may be on again — what with a $250,000 investment from Columbia Pictures (who will also be the distributor). Total budget should be around $600,000, and shooting is scheduled for Montreal this fall.

Apparently off-again, though, is the much-heralded Toronto production of **Introducing Suzie**. The film — to have been written by, and starring, Mickey Rooney — was budgeted at about $400,000.

Elsewhere on the Toronto front, Crawley Films, having just opened **Rowdyman*** (see review this issue), is now completing **Hamlet**. René Bonniere directed, and Richard Leiterman was at the camera, for this film version (shot some time ago) of a Toronto drama workshop presentation.

Alexis Kanner's production of **Mahoney's Estate*** (from which director Harvey Hart resigned after completing shooting) is close to completion. Kanner also stars (along with Sam Waterson, Diane LeBlanc, and Maud Adams), and the screenplay is by Terence Heffernan. Original budget was set at $650,000 and recent rumours that Kanner was seeking another $200,000 (supposedly for additional shooting) have since been denied.

Shooting was to have begun this month on **The Farm**, now with Rudy Dorn (rather than Barry Morse, as previously announced) directing. Christopher Lee is the main lead, and Ian Stuart is producing this psychological thriller. Barry Morse, on the other hand, is now set to direct **The Lichfield Strategy** (Ian Stuart again producing, as well as being responsible for the screenplay). This latter film, to be shot in England and Canada, will get under way this fall.

The film version of Bill Fruet's **Wedding in White*** went into production in early May. The low-budget ($275,000) feature is being written and directed by Fruet, with Donald Pleasance, Carol Kane, Doris Petrie, Doug McGrath and Paul Bradley as leads. John Vedette is the producer and Richard Leiterman the cameraman. Cinepix is set as Canadian distributor of this film, with Avco doing the honours in the U.S.A.

And rumour has it that a major Italian director and film company are discussing a possible film version of Pierre Berton's monumental history of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In Vancouver, meanwhile, Rogelio Gonzales Jr. has now completed shooting on his two Canadian assignments (**The Oval Portrait** — based on Poe's story — and **One Minute Before Death**) for Enrique Torres' Maple Leaf International Pictures. Both films were shot simultaneously and using the same casts (led by Wanda Hendrix, Giselle McKenzie and Barry Coe) for some $500,000. Cameraman was Leon Sanchez, who has worked on such films as **Night of the Iguana** and **The Magnificent Seven**.

Expatriate Canadian William Braden — one of the leads in Gonzales' two films — has launched his own company with production begun on the feature **Too Many People**. His firm is called Fat Choy Productions and is rumoured to have been backed by a syndicate of Chinese-Canadians.

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Pauline Kael, The New Yorker

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The Last Run: Well, the location work is very impressive indeed, and it's fun to watch George C. Scott slump and squint and sigh his way through his doomed-existential-hero role (throwing in just enough Bogart for the cultists to nudge each other approvingly), but the film lacks the central vitality and casual energy that all good genre films have — indeed, wallow in — and that, in the end, kills it. R.I.P.

The Cowboys: Director Mark Rydell keeps faith with the great westerns of the past by staying out of the way and letting his actors carry the film. Roscoe Lee Browne and Bruce Dern are terrific, and John Wayne isn't bad either. Unpretentious and thoroughly enjoyable.

Hot Rock: A caper film ought to be minimally believable, and **Hot Rock** is about as believable as Richard Nixon. Neither very funny nor very exciting, it comes on like a good TV situation comedy. If that sounds like three bucks worth of entertainment to you, go ahead.

Macbeth: Polanski's film is so pathologically, sadistically violent that it surpasses all belief. Shakespeare's theme is lost, and all we can do is wonder how Polanski is gonna top the last bit of bloody, close-up footage. At one point I thought Macbeth was gonna get a sword stuck up his asshole. Avoid this movie like the plague.

Straw Dogs: Peckinpah is a very good filmmaker; I wish he'd quit making fascist movies.

House of Wax (re-released in 3-D): The new 3-D process puts both images on a single 35mm film, which eliminates the jiggle. But polaroid lenses cut down the light, and with only one projector hitting the screen (instead of two, as in the original process) the image is rather dim. Also, the projection lenses were out of alignment, which gave me a headache. The film itself is just as awful as you remember it, but the sequence where the barker bounces those paddle-balls into the camera is still marvelous. This is, incidentally, an absurdly sexist film.

X Y & Zee: Sure, it's got Michael Caine and Elizabeth Taylor, but it's so incredibly soiled with male chauvinism that we can't begin to imagine where cast and crew have been for the past several years.

Tales From the Crypt: Good-time horror, heavily influenced by the EC comic book stories from which the film is drawn. Short scenes, bright colors, and characters defined primarily by their settings are the basic components for five vignettes laced with gasps and shudders. Love it to death.

Minnie and Moskowitz: Another chapter from John Cassavetes' abrasive vision of life. This installment is marred by passages of exaggerated conflict, but retains those moments of interpersonal insight which illuminate the director's work.

Nicholas and Alexandra: All the flavor of an American cheese sandwich on white bread. This feeble attempt at an historical epic tries to be sympathetic (or at least not openly hostile) to all parties: the Czar was just prone to sad but honest mistakes. As were the filmmakers.

Rainbow Bridge: All that glitters is not enlightenment. This film is a tatty collection of hippie-flower-child-mystic clichés dressed in psychedelic techniques that were banal among experimental filmmakers years ago.

Dealing, Or The Berkeley-To-Boston Forty-Brick Lost-Bag Blues: While being the best of the dope movies, this film bears nothing in the way of a personal stamp to call attention to 27-year-old director Paul Williams. Still, **Dealing** is thoroughly enjoyable as an evening's entertainment, and that's fine.

Play It Again Sam: *Playboy Magazine* comes alive on the silver screen as sweater girls and a "young executive" lifestyle complement Woody Allen's portrayal of a wimp with fantasies of being Bogart in Casablanca. Ostensibly a comedy about marital strife and personal identity, this film might be funny to male chauvinist pigs.

Last of the Red Hot Lovers: Son of **Play It Again Sam**, only the preoccupation this time is adultery. Allan Arkin plays Yossarian who has paddled to New York and set up a seafood restaurant.

Cool Breeze: Hot Air. The dramatic potential of this dismal failure is dissipated in the apparent indecision of the filmmakers as to whether they were making a crime thriller or a skin flick. Nothing of interest appears in this film — ever.

One Is A Lonely Number: While promising excruciatingly maudlin fare, this movie deftly sidesteps numerous pitfalls and creates a work that is elevated by its unpretentiousness and charming naiveté. Sedately sensual Trish Van Devere is excellent in her portrayal of a young wife suddenly faced with divorce. The tale of her adjustment is smoothly paced, well scripted, and reveals a genuine visual feeling for San Francisco, where it was filmed.

The Nightcomers: Suspense, laced with overtones of gothic horror, is undermined by this movie's utter predictability. Marlon Brando portrays a burly Irish rogue who teaches a young lad archery — after convincing the boy that: "Sometimes you want to kill those you love." See it coming?

Fritz the Cat: For its gratuitous violence, sexism, and racism, this load of kitty litter deserves as little attention as possible.

Long Ago, Tomorrow: Exploiting physical disability to wring a few more tears from a tear-jerking romance is reprehensible conduct, and all the witty belligerance of Malcolm McDowell and the seasoned acting of Nanette Newman can't disguise or excuse it.

Gumshoe: Yet another movie about a schmuck with Bogart fantasies. While the detective suspense inherent in the story would have been enough to carry the film, the added device of contrasting the lead character's actual personality with that of his Sam Spade idol serves primarily to detract from the overall effect. Too bad.

The Possession of Joe Delany: An evil spirit inhabits the body of a young man, and modern psychiatry's insistence on calling the condition insanity allows the shade to continue committing heinous crimes. A sterling throat-clutcher, marred only by some gratuitous (but fleeting) visions of mutilated bodies.

Black Jesus: 90-minutes of dull violence and Woody Strode trying hard. Is Africa

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really like this? Is the Pope a Jew?

Dirty Harry: Despite its fascist ideology (several scenes were obviously penned by J. Edgar Hoover, writing incognito) this cops and killers exercise by Don Siegel can give **French Connection** cards and spades and come out on top. It's only second-rate Siegel, though.

J. W. Coop: This film asks the question: Can the man who played President Kennedy in **PT-109** make it as the producer, director, and lead actor of a movie about a rodeo rider, fresh out of prison, trying to make a comeback? No, he can't, and in the process of failing on all levels he even neglects to capture any interesting or lyrical rodeo footage.

The Last Picture Show: This isn't the greatest movie ever made, but it's quite good. Considering how fragile the plot really is, the pacing and camerawork are stunning. Timothy Bottoms plays his litmus paper role quite well, and the supporting work is equally sensitive and skillful. If only the whole enterprise weren't quite so self-conscious . . .

Made For Each Other: A feeble attempt to palm off hysterics and shouting as dramatic intensity. Wonderfully received by New York's liberal chic, it may have a place in the Naked City's ethnic settings, but anywhere else . . .

The Organization: An ecumenical band of young folks (one black, one Chicano, one Oriental, one beard) gets pissed off at the pushers and decides to take on the Mafia. Sidney Poitier is the straight-arrow cop who helps. The opening sequence is tight and competent, a caper in the best Hollywood tradition. After that, zero.

Play Misty For Me: Clint Eastwood's debut as a director is not without interest. In the best scenes, he maintains a fine B-movie sense of claustrophobia, abetted by a strong, villainous performance by Jessica Walter. It's occasionally scary, and never pretentious. A blessing in disguise.

To Find A Man: This Columbia release serves to set a new standard for tastelessness by using abortion as the subject for a situation comedy. It's as funny as a rusty coathanger in the girls' john.

BOOKS

Perspectives on the Study of Film, John Katz, ed., Little, Brown and Company. $8.95, in Canada $10.30
Film as Insight, Edward Fischer, Fides Publishers, Notre Dame, Indiana. $2.50
The Electric Humanities, Don Allen, Geo. A. Pflaum, Publisher, Dayton, Ohio. $3.95

Edward Fischer's book, ***Film as Insight***, is rather frustrating. His folksy humor and directness are all over each page (he narrates a four-part series of short films called **Film Appreciation**, if you want to hear his Will Rogers style in action) though he seems to be taking a reasonable approach, beginning with technique and moving on to categories such as "the art film" and "student films" in later chapters. These later chapters are collections of notes on films applying the principles outlined in the first nine chapters. Over two-thirds of the book follows this format. No film credits are given, but there is a list of US distributors at the end.

The trouble is that his insight into film as a medium of communication or art stops on the threshold of appreciation of its formal elements. Despite his initial warnings that too much can be read into a film, or that the viewer neglects technique at the risk of misunderstanding the film, he is ultimately concerned with film as a vehicle for insight into oneself and into the human condition. There's nothing wrong with therapy or philosophy — it's just not film criticism or appreciation.

Fischer begins talking about symbols in film, confusing symbolic content with meaning, and using film experiences as occasions for rumination on life's joys and sorrows. Telling moments in the story become symbols requiring commentary.

"The great film directors make extensive use of symbol. They have a way of making us care about a simple object, say a stick or a bean plant, something we have seen often and have felt no emotion toward until we are made to see it as a symbol.

"A white stick in Robert Flaherty's **Louisiana Story** takes on the solemnity of a tombstone. In that semi-documentary, Flaherty shows a white stick, about three feet tall, jutting from the waters of a Louisiana bayou. It was driven there to mark the exact spot where oil-well digging will commence. The digging, as Flaherty sees it, is symbolic of the intrusion of the technological world upon the primitive world, an intrusion that changes the spirit of man because it changes his surroundings.

"Flaherty cuts back to the stick seven times. He shows it in close-up, saying in effect, 'Look at this, look at this! After this nothing will be the same again,' and when he gets that through to us the piece of lumber takes on an importance that we would not guess a piece of lumber could have" (p. 9-10)

It is Fischer who has made the stick a symbol, not Flaherty. The emphasis on the stick and its replacement, first by the drilling tower and finally by the "Christmas tree," the pipes and valves of the producing well, are part of the story; essential imagery in the film. To treat the stick as a symbol, as Fischer does, is to miss the point, or at least to read too much into it. Without additional information one simply cannot say what Flaherty's intentions were — as Fischer does. The stick is an important narrative and dramatic element of the story, not some symbol of man's metaphysical fate.

One of the main problems with film study in high schools and colleges (apart from the ignorance of most teachers) is that it proceeds in the same terms as the study of literature did when I was a student — still does, if students I know are at all reliable. Criticism is always undertaken in its most vulgar sense; i.e., carping or niggling. Most students have learned that the only acceptable response is negative, and they will produce negative comments on demand even for films (or books, poems, plays, etc.) they thoroughly enjoyed. This is one reason most students dislike discussion of film so much — it really does destroy them.

Analysis, in the same way, all too often treats film as a Rorschach test, as Fischer advocates. That is, analysis of a work becomes an exercise in symbol manipulation. Significance is fitted to elements of the film in such a way that a presumed hidden meaning emerges. Approaches such as this have robbed film and literature of their meaning, their relevance to students' lives. Symbolic, metaphorical meaning often derives from the teacher, and hence does not relate to the students. At the same time, emphasis on meaning in this sense makes it impossible to apprehend the work of art directly on any other than the narrative level. (Let me add that the way out of this impasse — the way to make things relevant — is not to treat the songs of Simon and Garfunkle as poetry. All that does is destroy S & G. It's all in the *way* you approach students and poetry. New titles in the old places is not the answer; adding film to the curriculum is not the answer. It still remains a curriculum.)

Perhaps Fischer should be given credit for trying to curb excesses of symbolic interpretation, though I can't guess what he would consider an excess. He warns against it more than once, then goes on to interpret **Pas de Deux** as an allegory of the many selves of the individual. He has difficulty practicing what he preaches. Most teachers do. He still manages to suggest one good idea, concerning meditation in film appreciation. (He is working within a Christian context here and by meditation he means thinking about, in silence; though it does seem possible that film can be used as a meditational device within more rigorous disciplines.) And surely he's right. Everyone needs some relief from overloaded inputs, some opportunity to integrate experience. Fischer suggests a ten-mile walk for every movie.

Don Allen's ***Electric Humanities*** comes on heavy with its electric silver cover and occasionally exciting graphics by Brent Warren. I guess it's a textbook, and I approached it defensively. Allen's words fill about half of each of the odd-numbered pages. Quips, quotes and pictures do the same on the even-numbered side. He begins with obeisance to the media gurus: Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, Alan Watts, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Stanley Kubrick. They are all hip. None except McLuhan is mentioned again.

Allen too easily lets slip truisms about print linearity vs. electric non-linearity. Since most teachers find McLuhan hard to understand, Allen owes us some explication. Instead, in presenting McLuhan's ideas, he gives us Granny Fanny platitudes: "Ideas are not to be dismissed simply because of their popularity." (p. 45) Then after giving us a dose of McLuhanacy he makes the strange assertion (which I understand, but which contradicts the basis of what he's been saying) that "What is not lost in the translation from one medium to another is the basic mythos, common to all media entertainment and to our way of life." (p. 57)

His chapter on movies is pathetic. To be generous, I could say that through a misguided attempt to be with it, Allen adopts Pauline Kael's bitchy, carping attitude toward art and ideas. But maybe he's just a bitchy anti-intellectual. (If anyone needs help refuting Kael and her supporters, by all means read Raymond Durgnat's *Films and Feelings*.) Allen sets up a dichotomy between film (art) and movies (entertainment, myth) and then proceeds to blame everybody else for it:

"After more than fifty years, film has acquired sufficient cultural accreditation to grant it probationary elegibility as an art form. The increasing brouhaha about 'film art' during the last decade has even qualified film for consideration in the classroom. But to talk about 'film' is to talk about Antonioni, Bergman, Bunuel, Fellini, Godard and Truffaut. To talk about 'movies' is something else altogether." (p. 107)

Such an attitude will never allow one to get to the excitement and importance of the work of Antonioni *et al*. Worse yet, such an attitude causes one never to appreciate fully the artistic accomplishments of all those other "movies". Allen must really look down on Ford, Welles, Hawks, Hitchcock, Penn, Preston Sturges and on and on. The problem with the anti-art school of criticism is that it denigrates the works you *do* look at.

But Allen doesn't really seem too concerned with looking at film. Like most teachers he is playing with ideas, playing head games with his students. "How does this relate to you?" he is saying. "Tell me your problems." Once on this level, he gets into the same old school bag, leading students to "self-realization", "awareness", "coping with the world", which really means learning your place. And what's worse is that he does it not only with movies, but with comic books, tv and rock and roll.

Throughout the book Allen defines terms we will need in dealing with students, terms such as hip, hype, cop-out, rip-off, put-on, but nowhere does he mention co-opt. And that's what he's doing — co-opting the popular arts so he can get to the kids. "The Electric Humanities is but a back-door approach to the same ideas that provide the substance of a liberal arts education" (p. 259) Couldn't have said it better myself.

If John Katz's book, ***Perspectives on the Study of Film***, has a problem, it is that it may not find its audience. It is an anthology aimed at educators and advanced students of film. Each article collected here presents an attitude to film that ought to be considered by everyone who sets out to teach film on any level, and by anyone who's gotten beyond the basics in his own study. Included are pieces by Aldous Huxley, Marshall McLuhan, Stanley Kauffman, Bela Balazs, Erwin Panofsky, Susan Sontag, Michael Roemer, Andrew Sarris, Pauline Kael, Stan Vanderbeek and many others, including several scholars that ordinary film buffs probably (and unfortunately) have not heard of before. It is perhaps those articles concerned with communications theory and curriculum design that are most needed by teachers, as a partial antidote to the mischief of Don Allen and Edward Fischer.

Katz's own piece in the book relates directly to this problem. He sees personal interaction as fundamental to any humanizing educational activity. Though he makes reference to graduate and undergraduate students, everything he says applies not only to high school but, in fact must, also applies to elementary education.

It is very difficult to pick out valuable pieces without listing everything in the book. Two of my favorites are Michael Roemer's, "The Surfaces of Reality," and Slavko Vorkapich's, "Toward True Cinema." Superficially it seems that Roemer is concerned with only one kind of realistic film. However, his discussion of concrete detail and the effect of spontaneity certainly holds true for all genres. Roemer gives us the key of understanding the real effectiveness of Flaherty's stick. It is meaningful not as a symbol, but as a *significant* detail. And it is significant not as one of a stock of symbols, but by virtue of its context. This use of concrete, specific detail (Henry James' "density of specification") is what makes film come alive, seem "real" whether naturalistic or not, with an inner coherence or, my favorite term, cogency. Roemer's article is one of the best statements to come from a working filmmaker.

Slavko Vorkapich is also a professional, with past experience as a "montage sequence" expert in Hollywood. Though his article sounds rather like a manifesto, his suggestions for elementary exercises in filmmaking are stimulating and effective. I know from personal experience that they work, and recommend that anyone teaching any aspect of filmmaking, on any level, try them. *Curt Oliver*

ENDLESS MOVIE

Halfway through Howard Hawks' 1934 comedy **Twentieth Century**, there is a scene which beautifully reflects one of Hawks' recurring themes: the over-riding importance of professional competence.

John Barrymore, playing Oscar Jaffe, a talented, though unbearably egotistical theatrical producer, finds a man in the railroad train compartment of his "creation" and one-time mistress, Lily Garland (played by Carole Lombard). "Stop this train!" Barrymore orders the conductor. "I want the man in Drawing Room B thrown out!"

"Nobody can stop this train," replies the conductor.

"I'm Oscar Jaffe telling you to stop this train!" insists Barrymore.

"Oscar Jaffe or no Oscar Jaffe, fire, floods or blizzards, this is the Twentieth Century ... and we get to New York on time!" replies the conductor, and even Jaffe realizes that there is nothing further to be said.

In the same sense that the Jefferson Airplane "gets you there on time," the conductor is saying that the Twentieth Century Limited *delivers* — and this is one of the key ideas in the film. Although the multi-leveled sensibility that distinguishes almost all of Hawks' films can be seen here in the ambivalent way he presents his leads (both of whom are among the most unattractive characters ever to appear in an American film, at least as hero and heroine), Hawks makes us accept them — because (most of the time) they deliver.

Jaffe, in particular, is an incredible drag — a pompous, self-inflated, ego-tripping ham, quite prepared to vilify anyone who obstructs his slightest whim. When we first encounter Jaffe he is reclining at his ease on a thick rug — the very image of a foppish "artiste". Even the way his associates refer to him in his absence ("The resident genius is on his way downstairs amidst a shower of meteors.") prejudices us against him.

What redeems him for us, and allows us to identify with him, is simply his competence. Hawks has frequently used this attraction / repulsion technique in his adventure films: Jeff Carter, for instance, in **Only Angels Have Wings**, and John T. Chance in **Rio Bravo**, are both seriously flawed characters, but they are so good at what they do that, instead of rejecting them, we are willing to give them a chance to work their problems through. In **Twentieth Century**, we can see Hawks applying the same technique to comedy.

The sequence in which Jaffe teaches Lily Garland how to scream is a perfect example of the double-valued system on which Hawks has based his film. Lily is a rank beginner —

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a perfectly terrible actress. Jaffe browbeats her, insults her, cajoles her, embarrasses her — all to no avail. Finally he dismisses the rest of the cast and states his intention to "stay in this theater until Miss Garland learns to scream." Much later, when all his efforts have failed, he resorts to a cruel expedient: he stabs Lily with a long hat pin. She delivers a heart-rending scream, and Jaffe applauds sardonically.

During this sequence our attitude toward Jaffe has been primarily negative. In the face of Lily's pathetic ineptitude, he treats her with contempt and tops it all off with the sadistic hat pin trick. But before we lock into thoroughly disliking him, Hawks wipes to a shot of the opening night audience applauding like mad, and suddenly our attitude undergoes a profound change. Jaffe has really pulled it off; he has succeeded in turning an amateur into an accomplished actress. Jaffe is good at what he does, and we are even more strongly inclined to accept the man and his methods when we see Lily's radiantly happy face. Ah, the joys of professionalism.

Hawks himself, of course, is no slouch in the competence department either. The wipe is a brilliant device. It accomplishes, in an instant, an emotional turn-about that constitutes the basic method Hawks uses to keep **Twentieth Century** on the track. We are never allowed to settle into permanent attitudes toward Jaffe or Lily (who, in short order, becomes a perfect bitch). Our attraction toward them as successful artists is constantly undercut by their childish egotism and endless fakery, but never so seriously that we reject them completely.

Hawks is aided inestimably by a fine script from Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Hecht may well deserve *auteur* status; the consistency of his characters from script to script, and the familiar cynicism of his comedy writing amount to a personal *mise en scène*. In any case, his script for **Twentieth Century** works beautifully with Hawks' direction to keep our attitude toward the characters swinging back and forth between admiration and contempt. The lines he gives Jaffe are perfectly in keeping with the mood of the film: staggeringly pretentious, yet not without a certain poetry, a certain heroic rhythm.

The double-edged quality of Hecht's script can be seen in the marvellous sequence where Jaffe is trying to dissuade Lily from going to a party.

"Go on, Lily," Jaffe declaims. "Go and dance in that lovely dress at that awful place. Let them paw the beauty and glamor that were mine for a moment." Lily sneaks toward the door, as Jaffe rushes to the window. "New York," he muses. "It received me once when I came here a little farm boy. It will receive me again. I remember on many a winter's evening —" Lily starts edging out the door, and Jaffe spots her. "Lily Garland!" he shouts. "I haven't finished yet! One night when that curtain comes down, you'll remember me. You'll know I helped a little. Goodbye!" He moves an inch closer to the window.

"Oscar, you are a fake!" says Lily.

"You . . . wash-woman's daughter!"

"What did you call me?"

"Soaking yourself in perfume like a hired girl, half undressed for other men. You don't fool me!" Lily slaps him. He raises his hand as if to strike her, but when she draws back he shifts to an open handed stance and says, "Go on, hit me. I'm not stopping you."

Jaffe wins again. Lily has had it, and she bursts into tears as Jaffe steps in, right on cue: "Oh Lily, I wouldn't hurt you for anything in the world. Do what you want, go anywhere you want, just love me. Say you forgive me."

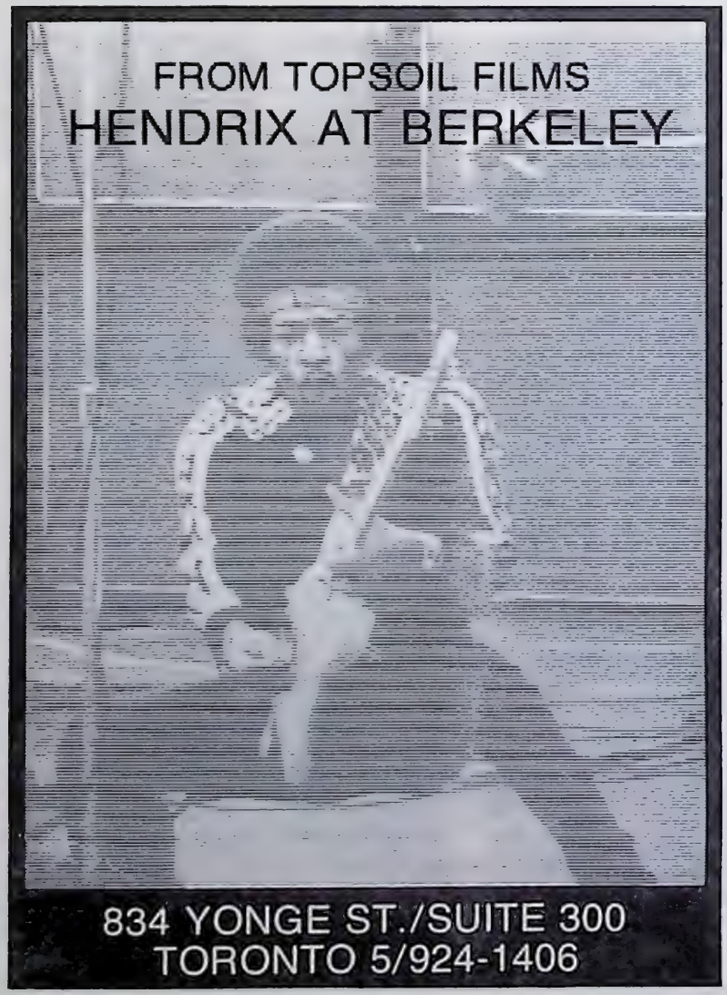
Lily is still weeping, and she delivers her last bit of dialogue so beautifully that we nearly weep with her: "It's all right, just don't talk. Put your arms around me. Just hold me."

Despite Jaffe's ham acting, he *has* got a sweet act. We can understand Lily's decision to stay with him, even as we understand her tears. Life with Jaffe must be hell.

But the apparent stability of the cease-fire (and our attitude toward Jaffe) lasts only long enough for Lily to leave the next morning, at which point Jaffe calls the McGonigle Detective Agency (whose motto, "The Eye That Never Closes," was copped by Truffaut for **Stolen Kisses**) to have Lily watched day and night. "Can you tap her phone?" asks Jaffe. "Sure," says McGonigle, "phone tapping is our specialty," and we're off again on another zig-zag.

We have begun to suspect, by this time, that Jaffe may actually be in love with Lily, but we don't know for sure until she leaves him. Even then, it is not his protestations of love that convince us, but the loss of his ability to produce hit plays.

There is a curious either/or relationship in many of Hawks' films between professionalism and sexuality — frequently his heroes must choose one or the other. For example, Chance, in **Rio Bravo**, refuses to sleep with Feathers, explaining, "If I wasn't in all this trouble, things might be different." Or again, in **Bringing Up Baby**, David's professional competence (represented by the dinosaur skeleton) can only co-exist with his nearly platonic relationship with his fiancee; once he accepts a potentially sexual relationship with Susan, the skeleton



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is destroyed. Hawks' heroes usually struggle against falling in love, and succumb despite themselves — fearing, perhaps, the fate that befalls Jaffe in **Twentieth Century**.

There is no other way to explain his failure to produce a success without Lily. Her opinion that Jaffe has been riding on her coattails is obviously incorrect — Jaffe was a successful producer before he met her, and we have seen him transform her into an actress. No, the loss of his ability to function professionally must be related to the fact that he has fallen in love. His masculine armor has been pierced, and he is unmanned. If he were not in love he could function without Lily; but he *is* in love, and he needs her to get it on.

Jaffe conceals this fact very well — on the surface, nothing has been resolved at the end of the film. Jaffe is still ego-tripping, and Lily is still fighting him, unsuccessfully, every inch of the way. Yet we suspect that Lily and Jaffe have accepted their love, and the play on which they are working will be a hit. That, according to Hawks, may be enough to save their hard-luck, professional souls.

Michael Goodwin

WOMEN IN FILM

All of a sudden there are women filmmakers. Singly, collectively, all over the country and even in Hollywood, women are getting behind cameras to express viewpoints nobody knew, or cared, they had before. It's like England a few years back: a whole movement of 17- and 18-year-old girls opened their own boutiques, when just a year or two before they'd have been working as salesgirls, never dreaming they could go into business for themselves. When you realize the *possibility* is there, the world changes.

Women, of course, have been *trying* to make films for a long time — trying to land a job, any job, working on anybody's film. In 1965, Joan Churchill was in L.A., applying to get into the union as a camera, uh, man. Women didn't *do* such things in those days. They might try, but they didn't *do* them. Somebody who wanted to hire her for a commercial asked NABET to let her in, and was told, after due consideration, "No." Joan was upset to the point of wanting to sue: "The only thing that came out to me was that I was a *woman*. What has happened since then is that I no longer want to be in the union." And that was the perfectly satisfactory end to the whole thing.

"There's nothing the union does for you," Joan says. "The kinds of things open to people in the union aren't very interesting. You couldn't *get* me to work on a commercial now. I'm just not interested." On the other hand, what with male supremacy's sudden drop in popularity, the union has had a change of heart. "A teacher of mine at the UCLA film school is on the board at the union. He said that the head of the union had said to him, would he ask Joan Churchill to apply again." Seven years before, not quite knowing what to do with Joan's application, union officials had telephoned members, asking what they thought of letting a woman in. A man at Hanna-Barbera (where a friend of Joan's overheard the conversation) gave what

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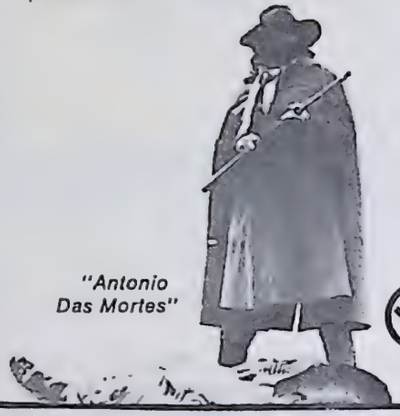

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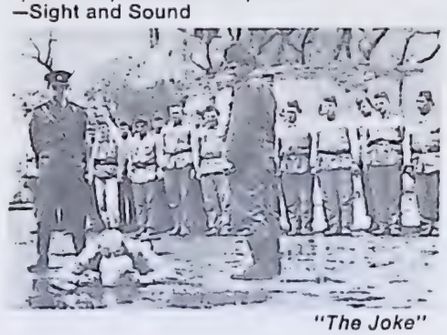

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was probably a typical answer — the men in the crew wouldn't feel free to tell dirty jokes and anyway there's all that heavy equipment.

Until recently, all of Joan's jobs have come from friends — and her father, whose company makes educational films. She feels a little guilty about the way she was getting work, but even nepotism didn't guarantee protection from "all kinds of discrimination against me as a woman in the industry. I was hired, all set to go to Ohio, and found out the day we were supposed to leave that the sound man didn't want to work with a woman." His prejudice, of course, came first, and Joan was fired immediately. "Another time we were going to do shooting on oil fields — but women are not allowed on oil fields. It's too dangerous." Recently, Joan had her first experience working with an all-woman crew, a very different situation. "The hierarchy you run into on a regular crew didn't exist. There was a very warm feeling. It was a fantastic experience."

Joan is almost apologetic that things are changing, that being a woman is part of the reason things are starting to jell for her. A couple of years ago she was editing, because she couldn't get work shooting. "Now I find it to my advantage to be a woman. I worked on a film for Another Mother for Peace, about families who were for the war until their sons were wounded or killed. I got the job because I was a woman." After that she was called in to work on an NET show about American families — because one of the families split up during the shooting, and NET wanted a female camera operator who'd be sympathetic with the woman. For Joan, "It's very hard to complain at this moment. Until two years ago it was hell."

For some women it still is. The industry is only starting to open up. "I know women who shoot, but who've not been able to make a living at it. There are all kinds of women in this business, if they were only given a chance. Film schools are turning out hundreds of them, but they can't get work."

The women's movement is making it possible for more women to make films (not a whole lot yet, compared to the number of men in the industry, but enough to get excited about), and most of the new filmmakers are relating to the movement. For some time now, Joan has been planning a film that will be entirely her own — a film about women. "For the NET film we shot 5,000 feet of film on this family. We practically lived with them. I want to make a film about a woman in the same way. Three women will be working on the film. We'll film the woman's life exactly as it happens. It will not be contrived to expose the situation." Joan is still looking for the right woman. She wants somebody who's not already into the movement — somebody just beginning to question her life. "I've found someone I'd really like to use — a mother without a husband. She's living with two other mothers and children. But she's the first one I've talked to."

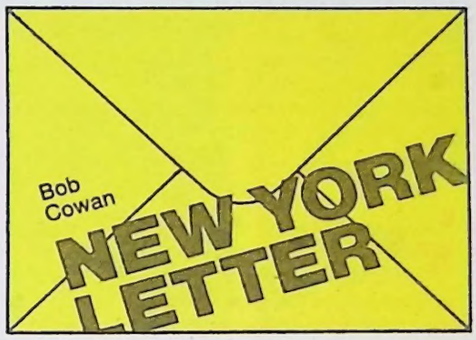
The film will be 20 minutes long, for showing in high schools and colleges. It's a smaller project than Joan had in mind originally. "It started out as a film about four women — me and three of my friends. People didn't know what to make of it. We couldn't raise all the money."

Then Jane Fonda got $8,000 from Jean-Luc Godard to make a documentary about making a film with him. Joan was going to bring her women to Paris and make the film (now expanded to five women) there. "We were going to be Jane's back-up. She was scared to work with Godard. He's the worst kind of sexist — the kind who says he isn't one." But Fonda came back from the Free the Army tour in Southeast Asia where she'd been followed constantly by a documentary crew, and said she couldn't take having another crew around all the time — not that and Godard too. So that was the end of that.

That was when Joan's father stepped in, to produce the 20-minute, one-woman version. "It's kind of narrow to make it about one woman. If I could get more money, I could expand it." At least Joan isn't in the union. If she were, she couldn't make films like this at all.

Sondra Lowell

Sondra Lowell is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer and critic.



I mentioned in my previous review of Richard Myers' film **Death Styles**, that I thought, in spite of its brilliance, that it was too lengthy and overloaded in content. This is quite true if you view it only once. There is too much to take in all at one sitting. I recently had the pleasure of seeing it again at Millenium and, if anything, I wished it had gone on longer. I do not hesitate to state that I consider it one of the really great "personal" films, and certainly the most important film, to come from the experimental cinema in the last few years. It is the kind of film that grows in complexity with every viewing. **Death Styles** has a sense of time forgotten ... a sense of innocence juxtaposed against the present. One of the concepts that prompted the film's creation was an idea from the Cakuntala .... "That which seemed a moment since disjointed in diverse parts, looks suddenly like one compact whole. Wondrous the chariot's speed, that in a breath, makes the near distant ... and the distant near."(Richard Myers) Myers' film contains the universal mythic sense that both Emshwiller's **Relativity** and Markopoulos' **Twice a Man** evoke. Films that involve you, each in their own way, in a living experience.

With **Circus Girls**, Walter Gutman continues his love affair with the circus and the muscular women who perform there. **Circus Girls** is an affectionate tribute. Mya astride an elephant lumbering through the forest, paintings of circus people by Gutman himself, Anita Vargas, the blonde princess of the circus, and other voluptuaries performing on the high wire. A ballet of form and anticipation. We are aware of the artists not only as performers but as individual people as well. The shooting is casual but many strong fragments stand out ... the artists moving from their trailer park to the interior of the circus ring where they become transformed into something really magic. A lovely slow-motion shot of a girl climbing the pole, a one-armed handstand on the slack wire; more slow-speed images of a girl on the trapeze where muscle movements become undulating waves. There is nothing slick about the film, it never becomes an academic documentary. It remains a statement of personal affection, a labor of love. The circus is simultaneously innocent and erotic. While George Kuchar's **Unstrap Me** was *about* Walter's attachment to the circus and the women in it, here we are seeing the actual visions of Walter himself. Bits of informative knowledge and history behind some of the performers are included as well. One very amusing shot shows 70(?)-year-old Walter trying to mount a horse with great difficulty, being tugged and hoisted over the top into the saddle, and almost not making it. Having seen the outtakes from this film as well as the finished work, I hope that something from this additional footage finds its way into future films.

Bob Cowan is a prize-winning Canadian filmmaker now living and working in New York City.

Larry Gottheim presented four films at a recent Millenium showing. The first two, **Doorway** and **Fogline**, both made in 1970, are minimal "Haiku"-type works. **Doorway** has the visual quality of a delicate pen drawing. The image consists of a winter landscape panned slowly across the screen from darkness to light and back to darkness again. The slow, intense steadiness of the panning motion gives no real intruding awareness of the camera movement. The shifting is fragile and serene, creating the effect of a scroll slowly being unrolled. The only interior movement: a cow shifting position, and a branch slightly moving in the wind. In **Fogline** the camera is rigid. A dense fogged area fills the screen. Electric wires sag horizontally. Shapes emerge slowly as the fog lifts. Floating images of tree-tops gain trunks and become anchored to the ground. The movement of the lifting of the fog seems invisible, yet the transformation takes place. The tonalities of the image are sepia. The time length of the film (12 minutes) is the actual time it takes for the fog to rise. There is no time extension beyond what is necessary, no drawing attention to the photographer. A very disciplined work. It has a sense of the mysterious; one never knows the precise point at which the transformations take place.

Both of these films are the best of any minimal-type films that I have seen so far. The third film, **Barn Rushes** is something else again — and doesn't work at all. For the duration of the film we are kept moving in a constant circular motion about a barn, for no apparent reason. The solid shape of the barn loses all semblance of density and weight because of the endless (underexposed) jerky camera movement. The method of filming has nothing to do with the reality of the material. The light flashes and film holes drifting by are self-conscious and "arty." The whole film is a clumsy exercise in circular panning and nothing else. Its running time is also irrelevent to the subject ... it wouldn't matter how long or short it was. Nothing new is experienced for the entire length of its dreary voyage on the screen. It is like riding on the edge of a turntable, staring stupidly at the centre spindle.

The fourth film, **Harmonica**, is a clever and entertaining film of a man playing his harmonica in the back seat of a moving car while the countryside rolls by. He plays a little, then holds the harmonica out the window where the wind rushes through it producing melodious chords. After some experimenting, he is able to play duets — himself and the wind — until the two seem as one. A very joyful film.

VIDEO: AN ALTERNATIVE

BY MIKE GOLDBERG

Professional television has evolved presentation patterns, with invisible but real limitations on their change. Its style is reflective of some of the radio people who involved themselves in it at its beginnings — borrowing from film formats — and is strongly influenced by ratings, time slots, commercials, politics, etc.

Because video is usually played back on a T.V. set, it is easy to associate it with broadcast television. But video is not inherently an extension of the present socio-economic structure to which professional television is subservient. VTR is merely a medium, an extension of those people using it.

With portable VTR it becomes possible for many more people to take part in media processes; even children can handle it. The professionalist complications built into T.V. do not exist in portapacks; the only inhibitions are lack of confidence in self-expression and creativity, and the limited availability of equipment.

Outlets for the growing libraries of video software (that is, everything but the equipment) have not yet been developed. Video theatres have not been able to exist without subsidization, and even then, there does not seem to be a growing audience for multi-screen presentations. Cable television seems to be a good way of accessing public media, but it will be a while before program quality improves and the viewing audience picks up on it. Access to hardware and distribution mechanisms are problems at this early stage of video development.

The most successful use of video to date lies in its recycling potential. With erasability, there is no pressure for production of perfect, lasting materials. Often, the tape is played back right in the situation and environment it was originally shot in: an instant turn-on for the people involved. The Ant Farm spent a lot of time "trashing around" America in a media van, stopping often and pulling out their portapack camera to record whatever happened to be going on, then playing it back to anyone around who was interested. Although they insist that their tapes hold no particular interest for the casual observer, they still get off on doing them.

It takes a while at the outset to work through preconceptions of what video can do, to arrive at what it indeed does, in a group and for the individual. A period of introspective recording preceeds feeling at ease with it as an expressive tool. Filmmakers in particular take a while to grasp the peculiarities that make video a useful, but different recording device. Film and video each have their advantages (see right), depending on the situation, and it might be worthwhile to gain some familiarity with their respective qualities.

To be continued in the next issue.

Mike Goldberg is a Vancouver-based video-artist and writer, recently returned from research in Japan.

	Film	Video
	The **resolution** of film, or its ability to record fine detail, is much superior to that of video. The "goodness" of film (taken as the product of the square of the number of lines by the number of steps) is given as 180 x 1,000,000 as compared to 6.7 x 1,000,000 for 405 line T.V. (*Film '69*, June 1969).	The television image is composed of 525 lines in the U.S. and Canada, and 625 lines in Europe. Colour T.V. has approximately 3000 points of phosphor per line, which emit light when activated by an electron beam scan. The electron gun moves so quickly that although the whole picture is never on the screen, the succession of points which make up the image is repeated 25 times a second. As the decay of the image in the brain is slower than that, a total picture is perceived; in the same way as a light bulb seems to emit a continuous beam of light but in fact flashes 60 times a second (50 in Europe). The image is composed of some 1,500,000 dots of colour; our brain fills in the gaps between the points and lines. Depth of field of a T.V. camera is about 4 feet, and resolution is lost around the edges of the T.V. screen, which is clearest in the centre.
	Motion is captured with more definition on film. Film has 24 frames per second (25 for T.V.), but special high speed cameras record upwards of 2000 frames per second. Shutter speed is 1/48 second.	25 images per second are recorded on videotape. For slow motion (used essentially for immediate replay in sports coverage), special professional quad. recorders with 125 F.P.S. are used, to be played back at 1/5 speed. Because the video camera records the image by scanning from top to bottom in an interlaced pattern, it is less effective at freezing motion than film. One advantage of video is the facility with which it can hold a single frame on the screen.
	Contrast: The white of a projected image depends on the strength of the projection lamp, the opacity of the exposed film, the quality of the screen, the distance of the projector from the screen, the lack of ambiant light, etc. To simplify matters, film is said to have a black to white ratio of 100:1 at ideal conditions.	The brightness of a television image depends on the power of the cathode ray tube, the size of the screen, the distance of the viewer from it, and the lack of ambiant light. The contrast depends too on the ratio of light area to dark in the television image. If there is a white square in the centre of a dark screen on a colour T.V., the ratio (based on the absolute of film) is about 50:1. With a black square on a white field, it drops to about 20:1. The resultant average is about 30:1. With black and white T.V., the average contrast is between 60 and 70:1 on a good monitor. An advantage of video is that ambiant light affects the image less than film, and it is possible to see other objects in the room; allowing note-taking during T.V. lectures, for example. When watching television for any length of time, it is advisable to illuminate the area behind the set, or the eye quickly tires from having one small area of photoneurons stimulated, and eye strain can result.
	Sound on film is a complicated process, printed as optical stripes. Super-8 with "synchronized" tape-recorded sound is now available.	As video is recorded on magnetic tape virtually the same as that used in audio tape recorders, sound is easily and inexpensively recorded in perfect sync with the picture. Most VTR's have audio dub facility. Portapacks have built-in self-levelling, non-directional microphones. When interviewing, a directional mike is plugged into the deck, and as the automatic gain control adjusts for varying ambiant sound, the volume of the subject's voice fluctuates accordingly.
	Colour is readily available in film at reasonable cost.	Only large commercial one-inch and broadcast two-inch studios can afford to work with colour video; and the colour-fidelity of mass-produced television sets leaves much to be desired. One Canadian company (among others) is researching the possibility of using thin plastic sheets with liquid-crystal as a T.V. screen. It would be hung on the wall. Apparently, single-tube colour cameras are being developed, to be marketed for under $1000.
	Processing film is a complicated procedure, practical only with costly apparatus. To copy a positive film it is necessary to have or produce a negative film; expensive when only a few copies are needed, but worthwhile when many are made.	Videotape recordings can be played back immediately, and copies of a video program are easily made with two synchronized record / playback units. Like audio tape, videotape can be erased. Thus, if the information contained on the tape is needed for a short time only, it is much less costly than film in the long run, as the tape can be used and re-used. It is not possible as yet to copy videotapes at speeds faster than real time. In order to mass-produce tapes, many machines are hooked up to the master, and record simultaneously. With video, it is possible to see the quality of the recording immediately afterwards, and when playing it back one can select segments of interest, record them on a second tape, and re-use the first. Many "takes" are sometimes necessary in filming, and this means that only a fraction of what is initially recorded is used — a source of film wastage.

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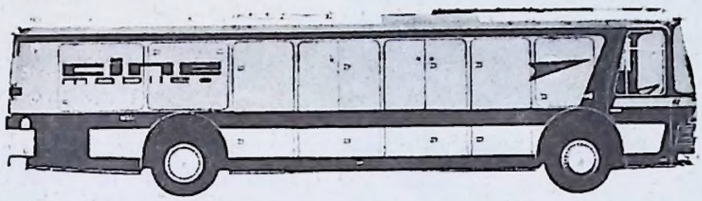

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